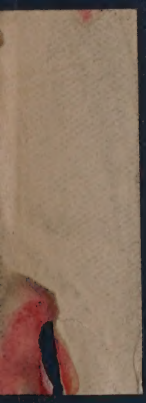

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THE BEING OF GOD AS UNITY AND TRINITY

BY

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NOTE.

THE occasion by which these lectures were called forth is stated on the first page. Their publication is due in part to the strongly urged wishes of many of the young men who heard them, and in part to considerations which it is not necessary here to explain, but among which the vanity of authorship had no part. That they may aid some minds to adjust new forms of thought to the old truth is my highest hope, and will be my best reward.

P. H. S.

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS,
January 24, 1891.

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THE BEING OF GOD

AS UNITY AND TRINITY.

LECTURE I.

PRELIMINARY FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS.

THE present is the first of three courses of lectures projected for the current year by the Trustees of the School.[1] The intention, as I understand it, is that the three courses shall cover, as far as may be, the three main divisions of the ancient Christian creeds, relating respectively to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. With this understanding, I interpret the theme assigned to me, viz., "The Doctrine of the Trinity, with especial reference to the Father," as calling for a consideration of the chief topics involved in the first part of the creeds. In the

[1] The occasion for providing these lecture-courses was the illness of Dean Gray, the professor of Systematic Divinity in the Cambridge School. It was hoped that a year's rest would restore him to health and duty; but before the opening of the scholastic year 1889–90, during which the lectures were delivered, he had already passed from earthly toil to heavenly rest.

shorter, the so-called Apostles' Creed, this part reads: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." In what is commonly called the Nicene Creed its form is enlarged but not essentially changed: "I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible."

The phrase "I believe" has for its object not one part of the creed, but all three, and is therefore repeated at the beginning of the third, after the intervention of the long second part. Its consideration belongs, therefore, to every course as much as to any one in particular. The importance of considering it at all depends chiefly on the view taken of the nature of the πίστις, faith or belief, here professed. If it were to be understood of *fides justificans*, then an inquiry into its nature would be of peculiar and far-reaching importance. But in that case it would find its proper place in connection with the third part of the creed. The truth, however, is that the ancient symbols are statements of doctrinal belief; so that the words "I believe" can scarcely be regarded as other or more than a declaration of intellectual assent. When the early creeds originated, the distinction between dogmatic belief and that spiritual attitude of man toward God to which we more especially restrict the word "faith," however distinctly

felt in the Christian life, was not made in theory. Taken, then, in the sense of what may be called an oral subscription to the doctrine of the creed, the formula "I believe" requires no special treatment.

The first subject, therefore, properly presented to us is GOD. The creeds bid us say, "I believe in God." Historically considered, this is not so much a profession of belief that God exists, as a rejection of all false gods. Nevertheless, the existence of God is the necessary basis and starting-point of both religion and theology. But while the former holds it as a datum of Christian consciousness, and thus of immediate certitude, the latter must treat it as a subject of thought and reflection, and seek for it a ground of certitude in reason. For theology, scientific theology, is not merely a systematic exhibit of what we believe, but its rational justification. The Christian mind cannot permanently rest satisfied with the intuitions of the heart, *i. e.*, with faith; it longs to see and know in its own way. And he assuredly is no true friend of faith who would suppress this longing, or discourage the attempt to satisfy it. The intellect of man is as truly and integrally a part of the divine image after which he was made, as his spiritual nature. The power to think and the necessity to exercise it belong to his being as inalien-

ably and eternally as the insight of conscience. They are mutually complementary — acting and reacting on each other. Neither can be neglected without injury to the other. Both alike must be fed and exercised, if the whole man is to advance and grow in well-proportioned symmetry. What is all the bigotry, fanaticism, and intolerance, from which Christianity has suffered so fearfully within the house of its friends, but the result of a distorted development of the faith-side of human nature — distorted for the very reason that it left the thought-side uncultivated? The leaders in the spiritual upbuilding of the Church — have they not always been those who were also the leaders of her thinking? True, the great majority of the Christian people cannot rise to the higher levels of thought; but the whole atmosphere of Christian worship and teaching is made one of intellectual enlightenment as well as spiritual culture for them also, by those who can. Hence that age and that church uniformly produce the highest results in Christian character in which faith and thought go hand in hand. The mind desires and seeks to grasp in thought the contents of its Christian faith, hope, and experience, not primarily to convert its faith-assurance into intellectual certitude, but much rather to become more and more fully conscious of the wealth that is its own, and to add to its love

and gratitude the noble tribute of intelligent adoration.

Theology therefore begins with the evidences of the existence of God. Not to quell doubt, but to know; and not to know the bare fact of the divine existence, but whatever else that fact may reveal. For since God is the ground of all that is, the thought of God, if we could but exhaustively think it, is the sum of all thought; the knowledge *that* God is, by the only way in which it is for us attainable, itself includes (as we shall find) much of our highest knowledge of *what* he is.

But before proceeding with our subject, it is well to hear their reasons who tell us that we are undertaking the impossible. This warning comes from various sides; philosophers, scientists, and theologians unite in uttering it. It is enforced by two closely related allegations: the one broadly asserts that it is impossible for man to attain to any true knowledge of God; the other is content with declaring that the existence of God cannot be established or proved by any processes of the understanding. Neither of these positions is necessarily destructive of faith in God. The second is held by numerous thoroughly theistic theologians; and even the first has been put forth as the very panacea for philosophic unbelief, and the best

means of leading men to the faith of the Church. But they leave the prospect of mental satisfaction so hopeless that it may well be doubted whether the confidence of faith can continue to maintain itself. In any case, if they are true, our wings are clipped before we attempt our flight; if not true, or even if not proven, they leave us at least the hope of success.

We turn then first to the contention that it is impossible for us to reach true knowledge of God. It would be highly serviceable at this point to inquire into the nature of knowledge, as to which mistaken conceptions are not rare; but it must suffice for the present to say that to know God means to have intellectual concepts, ideas, or notions, of his being and character corresponding to the facts. The impossibility of obtaining these is argued especially by what is called "the doctrine of the relativity of human knowledge." This doctrine owes its elaboration chiefly to impulses furnished by modern physical science, and is supposed to be peculiarly scientific and unanswerable, and to give the death-blow to all attempts to arrive at a rational knowledge of God. It is on this account that I feel constrained to devote a few paragraphs to its exposition, although twenty entire lectures would be needed to deal with it fully. It is not stated alike by all who use it. Indeed, it assumes

very different forms, and is combined with radically different doctrines, in the hands of Auguste Comte, Sir William Hamilton, John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, and others. But it always involves and starts with the proposition that we know nothing of objects in themselves, but only of their relations, first towards our cognitive faculties, and secondly towards each other. Knowledge is knowledge not of things but of relations; hence the phrase, relativity of knowledge. As to the relations of external objects towards ourselves (that is, towards our cognitive faculties), we only know that they give rise in us to certain perceptions or sensations. When I see a tree, I *know* only that there is an object that produces a number of peculiar modifications in my consciousness through the medium of my sense of sight. When I hear the wind rustling among its branches and foliage, all I know is that something produces another set of impressions through my sense of hearing. Even when I lay my hand on its bark, I know only that here is something that produces a peculiar form of the sensation of touch or feeling. Beyond these sensations my knowledge does not go. In fact, when I spoke of the tree as an object, implying that it has real existence, I went too far. So far as my perceptive faculties go, they do not and cannot assure me that there is a tree at all. I have sensations;

that I know; but the producing cause of those sensations may be God's power immediately exerting itself, as Berkeley thought, or it may be some hidden property of my own being that brings them out. All I know is the sensation. Whether this paper exists, whether this table, whether you, whether the whole physical universe is or is not, I cannot learn from eye, or ear, touch, or any other sense. Now, if this be a true account of what our senses can tell us, — and I am bound to add that I believe it is true, — it follows that unless we have another source of knowledge than that of sense-perception, we can have no *knowledge* of *any* form of existence except our own. How then can we know that God exists, to say nothing of what he is? If we cannot know the least, how can we know the greatest?

Sir William Hamilton's philosophy adds still another difficulty, — a difficulty, so serious that it is hard to see how he maintains the philosophic realism he professes. Admit for the moment that the tree has a real existence; still the knowledge obtained of it through perception is unreliable. We know it not "as it is, but as it seems to us to be." It is, or at least may be, materially modified by the medium (the atmosphere) through which the eye views it; and the eye itself may contribute elements of its own, — elements, *e. g.*, such as a differently constructed eye would see differently

and perhaps more truly. The result is that the supposed knowledge imparted in perception is, or may be, drawn from three sources: first, from the tree itself; secondly, from the atmosphere through which it is seen; thirdly, from the seeing eye. Hamilton himself illustrates his doctrine by supposing that if the whole knowledge of an object be twelve, four are contributed by the object itself, four by the medium that intervenes between the object and the percipient organ, and four by this organ. What must be inferred from this, if not that we cannot be sure of knowing anything? If two thirds of our supposed knowledge may be made up of spurious contributions, why not eleven twelfths? And if any part of the information gained in perception be spurious, how are we to distinguish that part from the genuine? Practically nothing but unqualified nescience remains.

The same conclusion seems to follow when we consider the other group of relations cognizable by us — those of objects to each other. All our knowledge of external objects, apart from that gained in perception, such as it is, begins and ends with points of resemblance or difference between them. It is, always, not insight into what the object is in itself, but mere classification. Let us go back to the tree, and ask, What is it? It is not an animal, for it does not move from the place it occupies, and

has not any of the means of locomotion found in the class of objects we call animals. On the other hand, it is not a rock, for it is an organic object, which a rock is not. It feeds and grows; and when awake during the summer, the sap flows through the trunk and all the branches. There is but one class of things it can belong to — trees. Looking again, we find that it is not a pine, nor a maple, but one of that class of trees we call oaks. Think about the tree, and reason about it as you will, you will never be able to say anything more than It is not like that, but it is like this. Say, it is wood: but what is wood? It is not metal, it is not soil, it is not water; it is something we meet with frequently, and which we classify as wood. The oak is hard wood. What is hard? Not soft. Hard and soft are merely correlative terms. Oak is hard wood compared with pine or even maple. Once again, nothing but classification, or putting one object in relation to another; no knowledge of the thing itself, in and by itself. How, then, can you know the Infinite, — you who cannot even know a tree? Assuming that he exists, — and you certainly cannot prove it, — you can only say, He is not like this, nor like that, nor like anything else; and put him in a class by himself, entitled the Unknowable.

I have brought these principles before you, not

to refute nor to deny them. Deny them I cannot, at least not without a great deal of qualification. To refute them, so far as that is possible, would lead us too far afield. In one sense we are bound to admit that our knowledge is relative, — relative to our faculties and mental limitations. Nor can we claim to have immediate and positive knowledge of substance apart from qualities. What I wish to do is to point out the *scope* of this doctrine. We hear much of agnosticism; and it is always in matters of religion. The inference naturally suggests itself, and is undoubtedly drawn by many, that religious truth differs from physical and mathematical truth as to its ultimate basis. Sometimes the very persons who talk with the utmost assurance and certitude about the composition of the sun, the origin of the planetary system, or the evolution of organic life, when they come to religion, *i. e.*, to man's relations to the Infinite, say, We know nothing, we can know nothing, about it; human knowledge is relative, — it can never reach absolute existence. Now if such persons were as good logicians as perhaps they are scientists, they would see and acknowledge that the doctrine of the relativity of knowledge applies to *all* knowledge: that when they say, *e. g.*, the phenomena presented by the sun are such as to suggest that it is composed of such and such material, *that*, on their own doc-

trine, leaves them just as much in the dark about the sun in itself as ever they were, — nay, more, that even of the phenomena, which are all they know, they can only say, Such they appear to us; whether they are so in reality, or may not appear very differently to other intelligent beings, if such there be, we do not know. In short, whether any part of our science is *objectively* true, we cannot affirm; we only know that it is true to *us*, — true in relation to our human faculties.

Mr. Herbert Spencer, far enough from assuming postulates which he can possibly do without, feels the sweeping destructiveness of the doctrine of the relativity of knowledge so keenly that he boldly argues that this doctrine itself involves the reality of absolute being. "Every one of the arguments" (he says [1]) "by which the relativity of our knowledge is demonstrated, distinctly postulates the positive existence beyond the relative. To say that we cannot know the Absolute, is, by implication, to affirm that there *is* an absolute. In the very denial of our power to learn *what* the Absolute is, there lies hidden the assumption *that* it is. . . . It is rigorously impossible to conceive that our knowledge is a knowledge of Appearances only, without at the same time conceiving a Reality of which they are appearances; for appearance with-

[1] *First Principles*, p. 83, Appleton's edit.

out reality is unthinkable." He speaks of "our firm belief in objective reality," — *i. e.* our firm belief that when our eyes see a tree, there is a real object that affects them, — and says of this belief that "metaphysical criticisms cannot for a moment shake" it.[1] That is to say, without acknowledging it, and contrary to the fundamental principles of his philosophy, he takes refuge in what are commonly called "primary truths," "necessary ideas," "irresistible convictions." But even thus the fell swoop of the doctrine is not to be evaded. It is true, he admits inferences drawn from perceptions as reliable guides to truth, — as who does not? — but on what ground? Though my mind be so constituted that I cannot but believe that two is more than one, who can assure me that this belief is equally necessary to the inhabitants of other worlds, if such there be? Though *we* may all agree on the laws of logic, and say that such and such modes of reasoning necessarily lead to true results, who shall assure us that even our algebra and geometry are not masses of absurdity to the people of Mars or Jupiter? In one word, the question raised by the doctrine of the relativity of knowledge, grounded on philosophic sensationalism, is neither more nor less than the question, How do we know that anything is true, — that

[1] *First Princ.*, p. 93.

knowledge of any kind or degree is possible? The astronomer's most carefully worked-out train of reasoning depends for its truth on the validity, first of logical processes, and secondly of the axioms and postulates that lie at the foundation of all mathematics; and who can show that these are anything but relative truths?

This is the bottom question of this doctrine; and you see that it covers the whole field of possible or impossible knowledge. Agnosticism is an egregious self-deception when it limits itself to religion.[1] And the answer to it may be indicated in few words. We cannot prove the absolute and universal truth of what we accept as axioms, postulates, or primary truths. We cannot demonstrate the universal validity of the syllogism, or any of the laws of reasoning. We must *assume* that the universe is constructed on honest principles; that there *is* truth, and that we can attain it. On this assumption we set out, and then find its verification at every step. The astronomer predicts an eclipse, and the event confirms the truth of the principles on which he reasons. Experience shows every day in myriads of instances that we do get at the truth of nature, and that therefore our logic and our primary principles, albeit we cannot apriorily

[1] Cf. on this point the acute volume of Arthur James Balfour, *Defense of Philosophic Doubt.*

prove them true, are certified as true by their results. Can we consistently reject them as fallacious when they exercise themselves on matters beyond nature, simply because their verification — by no means wanting — is less direct and compulsory? All knowledge does start with sense-perception — that we admit; but why must inferential reasoning, implicitly trusted within the bounds of nature, be traduced as a deceitful *ignis fatuus* when it leads to conclusions concerning what lies beyond?

Thus far I have treated the doctrine of the relativity of knowledge in what, for the sake of distinction, may be termed its physical-science form; but it appears also in a more abstract, dialectic habit. In this form it sets out with the conception of God as the Absolute and Infinite, and disports itself in a boundless field of what I cannot but regard as word-jugglery. Especially is this the case with the term "absolute," which each one may define in his own way, according to the needs of his philosophy. Mansel's "Limits of Religious Thought" made us of the elder generation now living nauseatingly familiar with the capabilities of the argument in this shape, although it was done in the supposed interests of faith. If the Absolute Being is to be regarded as a being who cannot stand in

relations of any kind to any other being or even to himself, then, of course, he cannot be known; not only because we can only know relations, but also because, the moment he is known, he stands to the knower in the relation of the known. And by parity of reasoning he cannot know himself; for that would imply a relation of himself to himself. But is this reasoning, or is it mere word-play? Is it not assumed here that whatever may be truly affirmed of one relation is applicable to all? and that *relatedness*, whatever else it may include, always implies a limitation imposed from without? Is the relation of knowing subject and known object of the same or similar nature and import as the relation of master and slave, of restrainer and restrained, of conscious mind to unconscious nature? When A knows B, makes him the object of thought and contemplation, is B, though perhaps utterly unconscious of A and his thought, thereby in any way affected, changed, hindered, or limited? Why, then, should our knowing God be incompatible with the divine nature or inconsistent with any true idea of God? If this flow necessarily from the contents of the term "absolute," by what right or reason is that term applied to God? Certainly, the idea of the God in whose existence the Christian believes is not by him conceived as absolute in that sense. Conceive of the Absolute, not

as the necessarily unrelated, but as the not necessarily related, as the always Independent, *i. e.* as the One who has his cause and source of existence, not outside of himself, but in himself, — and that difficulty vanishes.

Similar difficulties are found in the idea of God as the Infinite. From the time of Plato down to Hamilton and Mansel, the Infinite, as such, has been regarded by many philosophers as unknowable. It is said that we cannot *conceive* of the infinite, and hence cannot know it. Now, if that means — and it can scarcely mean anything else — that we cannot form a mental image of infinitude, be it time, space, or being, it is true. But even Mr. Spencer, although he seems to use the words "inconceivable" and "unimaginable" as synonymous,[1] allows of what he not inaptly designates "symbolic conceptions" as useful and necessary, notwithstanding their inadequacy as images.[2] Or must we say that we can know nothing that we cannot depict in the imagination? How, then, can we think or know *time?* All our abstract and generic conceptions are thoughts of which we can form no mental images. Who can conjure up a mental picture of wisdom, evil, mankind, vertebrates? Yet we think thoughts in those words, and we

[1] Cf. Balfour, p. 196.

[2] *First Princ.*, p. 26 *b.*

know the contents of the thoughts, and can communicate them. Why, then, can we not think the Infinite? If to think necessarily implies the actual and simultaneous perception by the consciousness of all contents of the thought, then indeed we cannot; but does it? When I say, The year is drawing to a close, do I think nothing unless every day and every hour of the year is distinctly present to my consciousness? It is true that I could think over the year in such a manner as to bring every day, hour, and minute successively before my mental vision; but it would take another year to do it in, just as Hamilton says that it would take eternity in which to "construe to the mind" an infinite whole, the possibility of knowing which he therefore denies.[1] But if I can think the thought "the year" only in this way, then I practically can think it as little as, according to Hamilton, I can think the Infinite, — which would annihilate all thinking. In fact, however, we *can* think the Infinite; and that not only as a negative thought, but quite positively. The form of the word is indeed negative, but the thought is as positive as that expressed in the words "omnipotent" and "omniscient." The positiveness of the thoughts "infinite time" and "infinite space" is, it seems to me, very evident from the fact that every effort to

[1] Wight's *Ham. Phil.*, p. 354.

think of a limit to them fails. Carry the idea of duration backward or forward until the mind wearies in the effort; still you cannot stop. Why not? Because prior to your efforts you had the idea of infinite time in your mind, and you know that you have not yet fulfilled its demands. You had it as a model, and that model tells you that there are no limits. The infinitude of time and space are not ideas given by experience, or logically deduced from what experience gives. They are given in the constitution of the mind. Therefore, so far as the infinitude of God is concerned, albeit we can neither picture it nor fully embrace it in thought, it erects no absolute barrier against our knowing God, although it does make our knowledge unavoidably incomplete.

Let us pass on to the second allegation above adduced. God, we are assured, exists, and may be known; but his existence cannot be demonstrated by the reason, — it is given. But given how, and where? Some theologians would reply, In the Scriptures. They may not deny the possibility of other proof; and in so far as they do not, their opinion does not fall under this head. But they probably do; for, as a class, their regard for the powers of the understanding in the region of metaphysical truth is not great. Jealousy for the

honor of revelation gives rise to this unfortunate bias. The effort to prove the existence of God is at all events useless in their view. However, whether they would say impossible or useless, their position in either case is not without direct bearing on the point before us, and may therefore rightfully be adverted to here. They claim that the sacred Scriptures reveal the existence of God. But the Scriptures themselves appeal to proofs outside of themselves. St. Paul, for example, says: "For the invisible things of Him, since the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity." And hence the heathen, though they have not the Scriptures, do have some knowledge of God, — sufficient to render them excuseless. The conclusive consideration, however, is that the divine authority of the Scriptures can in reason be grounded only on their demonstrated divine origin; so that the argument, if argument it can be called, moves in a vicious circle, in that it assumes the existence of God in order to establish the authority of the Scriptures, and then uses the Scriptures to establish what has already been assumed. I am not denying that, if the Bible were placed in the hands of a heathen, it could enlarge and correct his defective notion of God; nay, more, — if the case were supposable of a sound mind

utterly destitute of any idea of God, the Scriptures could put such a mind in possession of a very lofty conception of God, inferior only to that which has been attained by Christian theology through ages of divinely guided experience and thinking. But to impart an idea is not to prove its objective truth. The mind thus instructed, even while it accepted the idea as carrying in itself the highest notes of truth short of absolute necessity, would still ask for proof, and be restless till it found it. All this is so clear that the appeal to the Bible at this point can only be made by such as are hostile to scientific theology, and regard dogmatic theology as merely a systematic exhibition of biblical teaching.

Very different is the contention of those theologians who deny the possibility of rationally proving the existence of God on the ground that "its very certainty precludes demonstration;" and that belief in it is already present in the mind that attempts it, and "vitiates all the reasoning in such demonstrations."[1] That a preceding conviction often leads to loose and inaccurate reasoning in support of it cannot be doubted; but to conclude that therefore such a conviction cannot possibly be logically demonstrated would itself be a specimen of very loose reasoning. Does not the author

[1] Hedge, *Ways of the Spirit*, p. 185 f.

whose words I just now quoted himself suggest an argument of utmost force and value when, but a few lines farther on, he says, "Of all existence, the correlate in reason is Absolute Being, — *i. e.* God"? Very true, I say; but suppose I propound this sentence to the agnostic, will he not at once reply, Prove it? And if I cannot so explicate the contents of the concepts, existence, correlate, reason, and absolute being, as to make the truth of the statement apparent, what is its value, either for him or for me? Or, if I can and do, is not that a demonstration that for reason the absolute being exists?

I do not deny that the idea of God is an intuitive, necessary idea of the reason. But the necessity of all necessary ideas is not equally obvious. Some carry it on their faces, so to speak; others allow it to be seen only upon the closest scrutiny. If the idea of God be among the latter, to show that fact will be to prove it, or, if you please, to prove that it neither needs nor admits of "syllogistic proof." That it is not one of the former seems to my mind very clear. I attach no value to the oft-repeated assertion that savage tribes have been found without any idea of God whatsoever. Accepting its truth, it might be considered as proof that such tribes had not yet fully risen to the level of true humanity, or had by retrogression fallen far

below it. It is, however, far more probable that the reporter, whether traveler or missionary, failed to elicit the exact truth. Be that as it may, it is certain that the idea is found in very different degrees of perfection. Its import is realized in forms of expression and acts of worship so far asunder as to obscure their relationship to a common thought. It is always and everywhere a growing idea, keeping pace upon the whole with the development of the intellectual powers. It never appears with the full force of an idea or conviction which no one can in good faith deny or doubt. No sane mind can doubt that every effect has a cause, that the whole is greater than one of its parts, or that a body can be in but one place in the same instant of time. These are propositions that only need to be presented to the mind to be recognized as necessarily true. No logical processes, other than mere definition of words, intervene, or can intervene, between the conception of them and their acceptance as true. The illiterate mind may possibly fail to understand the terms "cause and effect," or the technical element in the assertion that the whole is greater than the part; but the moment it does understand, it assents. It can no more think it possible that a part is equal to the whole than it can believe that pleasure and pain are identical. But it *is* possible to say, "There is no God,"

without feeling that the assertion cannot be true. The "fool" may doubt and tremble while he says it, but he is not self-convicted of uttering an absurdity. The idea of God, though necessary, is not immediately self-evident. The very fact that men are always seeking for arguments to prove it shows this. For it never occurs to any one to seek for proof of what he cannot but believe.

Others describe the idea of God as a moral intuition or conviction, or as the utterance of the faith-principle. Exactly what is meant by this is not easily ascertainable, if at all. There is no doubt that the moral nature is strongly operative in bringing the idea of God home to the consciousness of men as an effective moral regulative. But whether the moral faculty can either discover or receive ideas without the intervention of the reason is quite another question, on which I shall not enter. Enough for my present purpose that, as a moral conviction, the idea of God is not antecedently debarred from the possibility of rational demonstration. The moral, no matter how immediate and fundamental, ever seeks expression and confirmation in terms of the intellectual, and conversely. In beings both moral and intellectual, the two sides cannot permanently rest in unmediated separateness. Both seek to realize their perfect coales-

cence in unity. No one can be satisfied with logically reached conclusions that contradict his moral instincts, or even fail to manifest their harmony with them. But just as little can he be content with moral convictions, the rationality of which cannot be made out. To assert that the idea of God is a moral intuition, and as such incapable of rational demonstration, is to deny the unity of our nature, and to make it the prey of miserable internal discord.

One other phase of the same general objection might engage us; but it is better to dismiss it for the present with a mere mention. It is said that no arguments yet brought forward to prove the existence of God are sound and conclusive. Whether this be true, or how far it is true, will manifest itself as we pass them in review.

LECTURE II.

ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD — THE COSMOLOGICAL AND TELEOLOGICAL.

THE arguments most frequently adduced to prove the existence of God are five in number, respectively designated as the ontological, the cosmological, the teleological, the moral, and the historical. Most writers who treat them do so in the order in which they have just been named. The advantage of so doing is that the discussion of the ontological argument at the outset furnishes a number of determinations by which the others gain a wider reach than they possess in themselves. For these arguments are not to be regarded as five wholly distinct and mutually independent lines of reasoning, leading severally to the same immediate result. That is true only within very narrow limits; beyond these limits, they are complementary of each other; and of no one of them can it be said that by itself it establishes the existence of a being containing in himself all that our idea of God demands. But there is also, and I think greater, advantage in following the order in

which we may suppose the arguments to have been originally thought out or discovered. This will help us to estimate the exact weight of each, taken by itself, and (what is of more importance) will enable us to trace the gradual growth of the idea of God, to the successive stages of which the several arguments more or less closely correspond, and which gives life and inherent probability to logical processes which in books of systematic theology too often appear abstract and dead.

If the allusion just made to the historical growth of the idea of God — *i. e.* the gradual increase of the contents of that idea to human thought — be objected to by any, it can only be by such as imagine that primeval man, prior to his lapse into sin, was in possession of the most perfect intellectual knowledge of God attainable by the human mind, and that, notwithstanding the fall, this knowledge survived, and was transmitted by the first man adown the line of his descendants, albeit with ever-diminishing purity and clearness. But of this there is no evidence whatever. Even the first chapters of Genesis, supposing them to offer literally true history, do not furnish a particle of it. They do exhibit man as the son of God, made in his image, and therefore full of intellectual possibilities, and in original moral harmony with his Maker, but yet as an undeveloped being, who

could not hand down to his posterity that which he himself did not possess. As he had neither art nor science, but was soon surpassed in these respects by his offspring, so he had no such intellectual conceptions of God as to place him far above their level. He knew God as good to him, as far more powerful than himself, and as his Master. Until his mind was unfolded and trained in the school of experience, he could know no more. But not to insist on this, assume that he knew all that imagination can ascribe to him; you do not thereby set aside the historical growth of the idea of God. For history has nothing to do with the Garden of Eden. It deals always with sinful, and through long ages with ignorant, savage men, by whom scarce a hint of primitive knowledge, if it came to them, appears to have been apprehended or retained. And it finds that their idea of God grew in the same way that their ideas about the physical world grew. True, it nowhere witnesses the birth of the idea; but it meets it innumerable times in the state of weakest, scarcely breathing existence. It does not, as was once supposed, find that the first stage in religious belief is that of fetichism. That error has been effectually set aside.[1] But man's earliest conceptions of God were undoubtedly anthropomorphic and anthropopathic in the extreme.

[1] Cf. Max Müller, *Origin of Religion*, Lect. 2.

What are the gods of oldest Egypt, Chaldea, Greece, but magnified human beings? Is not the distance betweeen those conceptions of God or gods, and that presented by the Christian church of the one Infinite and Eternal Spirit, almost too vast to be apprehended? Surely, the transition from the one to the other of conceptions so far apart cannot have been otherwise than gradual. The sacred Scriptures themselves fully warrant this assertion. From the early Hebrew conception of a God whose footsteps are heard in the garden, and who walks and talks with man in face-to-face communion, to the prophetic idea of the unapproachable transcendence of Jehovah is a great advance; and greater still, from an intellectual point of view, is that from the conception of God as distinctionless personal unity, to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. But it is not to be supposed that the ages that intervened between these flood-points were periods of mental stagnation. They were spring-times of deeper and broader views, — intervals during which, under the brooding of the Divine Spirit, the chaos-like confusion of thought assumed ever greater order and harmony.

Now that which first brought the existence of God home to men as an element of conscious thought may be assumed to have been some form of the cosmological argument, so called because it

is suggested to the mind upon the contemplation of the κόσμος, the physical world. With this, therefore, we fitly begin. It has been presented in numerous modifications. Aristotle, more than three hundred years before Christ, argued from the presence of perpetual motion, *i. e.* change and transition, in the world to the existence of a being from whom all motion proceeds, a prime mover, whom he identified with God. Modern philosophy presents what is substantially the same argument, in this form: everything in the world is perishable and transitory, contingent, — *i. e.* dependent for existence on something else. Hence there must be something which is not contingent, but necessarily (*i. e.* self-) existent. The cogency of the reasoning in either form is derived from our conception of causation. Every movement or change, we say, has a cause; and experience teaches us that in the physical world every effect-producing cause is itself an effect of a remoter cause, and that of one still more remote, and so on as far as we can trace the line. But the mind, by constitutional necessity, refuses to conceive this line or chain of causation as running forever backward into the past without commencement or starting-point. For, since every particular change or effect — that is, every link in the chain — has a beginning, the chain as such must have had a beginning.

To say that it had not would be to say that somewhere there was a cause that had a beginning and yet did not begin, which would be absurd. Hence the mind is driven to the conclusion that, back of the whole chain of causation, there existed and operated a cause which, unlike all causes of which we have experience, was not itself the effect of an antecedent cause, but — for this is the only possible alternative — has the source of its own existence in itself.

Nor is this all. That which urges to this conclusion necessitates another step. The self-existent cause or causes cannot be conceived as impersonal. It cannot be mere physical energy. The very idea of a physical cause implies that it is itself an effect, a something through which energy is transmitted, but by which it cannot be originated. It is just for that reason that every cause in the cosmic system drives us back to another more ulterior cause. Moreover, as a stream cannot rise higher than its source, so a cause must be adequate to its effect. Therefore, since in the world we find not merely organic objects, but personal beings, men, personality must be found in the First Cause.

This conclusion is as old as human intelligence. Its root exists in the mind in the form of a first principle of thought or inborn conviction, prior to all philosophical analysis. The mind is so made

that it demands a cause for every effect, and regards an effect without a cause as impossible. It was this innate conviction that gave to men their first intellectual assurance of the existence of something higher, more powerful, than themselves. They saw the rain and lightning, heard the thunder, felt the wind, and instinctively said — not, as we say, *it* rains, *it* lightens, but — *He* rains, *He* lightens, *He* gives forth his voice. They knew that these phenomena had a cause beyond the compass of their own force, and thence inferred the existence of power or powers above themselves. The nature and steps of the reasoning were by no means as clear to them as they are to us. They did not even ask themselves why it was impossible to suppose that thunder, rain, and lightning had no cause, but just happened; still less did they inquire by what right they inferred the personality of the source of energy. Their intellects — unintimidated by the analytic habit, which, while it tends to accuracy of reasoning, too often seems to liquefy the mind, and incapacitate it for retaining the impress of any conviction except that knowledge is difficult — worked automatically, without much aid from reflection, under the powerful influence of the inborn idea of causation. It did not at all occur to them at first to take account of the fact that between the rain and the rain-maker, whose existence

they confidently inferred, there might be many other causes, such as clouds to carry the water, and winds to waft them on. Even the personality of the rain-maker was but an unconscious inference from the general principle of causation. Under the influence of this apriori conception, imbedded in the constitution of their minds, they passed at once from the rain to a personal rain-maker. Observe, I do not say that man's conscious albeit elliptical and unanalytical reasoning first suggested the thought of a higher being. That thought he had before, perhaps long before, in the shadowy form of what the Germans call *Ahnung*, — foreboding; but it now found a place in his reason, became an accepted truth, of which he could give some account, and which henceforth exerted a strong determining influence over his thought and conduct. The existence of higher powers explained not only the rain, lightning, thunder, wind, or whatever else first led his mind up to them, but also the flowing river, the drifting cloud, the changing seasons, the appearance and disappearance of organized life in all its forms.

But to return to the argument. It is evident that neither in the form in which primitive men employed it, nor in that which maturer thought has given to it, does it of necessity lead to *one* First Cause. That it did not do so in early ages

is shown by the prevalence of polytheism. Each god is, in his own special sphere, a first cause. That it does not in the modern form may be seen when we give it the most general expression of which it admits, as thus: If anything exists, then something self-existent exists; but something does exist, *e. g.* myself: therefore something self-existent exists. The argument is good as far as it goes; but it does not go so far as to show that the self-existent something is numerically one and unique. In order to justify that conclusion, the major premise should be: If anything exists, then there must be one, sole, unique, self-existent something. Can we justify the general proposition in that form? Not absolutely, but with high probability. We can, at all events, come much nearer it than men did in polytheistic days. Our larger acquaintance with the processes of the physical world tends strongly to lead us to one sole author of all that is. No doubt even the most primitive man had some conception of what we call intermediate causes. The veriest savage, when the wind overturns his hut, knows that the wind is not the first cause of the catastrophe. He goes back to the maker, ruler, or soul of the wind. But where he can trace two or three links in the chain of cause and effect, we can follow it up through an almost endless succession of actions and reactions. Where

his attention is arrested by but a few of the more striking phenomena, science has taught us to recognize causality everywhere. True, the inference from a long chain is not more cogent than that from a short one; nor that from many chains necessarily more conclusive than from a few. But the long chains and the many have brought us to perceive the unity that pervades the world. We see that innumerable lines of causation work in perfect harmony; that movements in the most widely separated parts, and of the most opposite, yea, mutually destructive character, are so balanced that nevertheless the world is what the Greek philosophers already called it, a *Cosmos*, a well-ordered whole. We see even more. We see that every cause and effect is so interlinked with others as to suggest that, when we talk of chains of causation as if they were lying alongside of each other without manifold mutual connections, we are wide of the truth. A much better symbol is furnished by the genealogical tree of some ancient family, with its countless lines of descent, direct and collateral, and its equally numerous intermixtures by marriage with other families. In truth, all the great doctrines and theories of recent physical science, such as the conservation and correlation of force, tend directly toward the conclusion that energy circulates in the universe as the

blood in the living organism; and that, as the latter has its propelling centre in the heart, so the former must have some one analogous central cause. It is doubtless because some glimmerings of this truth have always been perceived by men that germs of monotheistic thought so frequently appear in the midst of the densest polytheism. Just so far as we find causation leading us back to one centre, so far are we constrained to assume one sole cause of the physical universe. Nor, though this argument trenches closely on the borders of the teleological, is it justly chargeable with being a mere anticipation thereof. It is wholly independent of the idea of design. It plants itself, on the one hand, on the indestructibleness and therefore unity of force, however numerous its metamorphoses; and on the other, on the permanence of the world, notwithstanding the apparent variety of incompatible energies. But it fails of absolute conclusiveness because neither of its alternative bases rests on anything more than a very incomplete induction.

Here let us pause to consider one or two objections. The cosmological argument is worthless if the conception of causation on which it depends be vulnerable. Now, Hume maintained that it is. The relation between cause and effect, he contended, may, for aught we know, be nothing more than

invariable sequence, — invariable so far as our experience goes; and beyond experience we have no knowledge. As often as we see event A, we find it followed by event B: and this frequently recurring sequence begets in us the confident belief that B is dependent on A, and that A determines B. There may be more than sequence; but we can never know, and therefore have no right to assume, that there is. All our knowledge springs from experience; and experience does not tell us anything about the relation between what we term cause and effect, except that the one goes before and the other follows after. Of course, if this be all we know of causation, the cosmological argument falls to the ground. But is it all we know? Night invariably follows day, and winter summer; but does any one ever think of them as causes and effects? Year in, year out, the factory bell rings at noon, and before it has ceased to vibrate a stream of operatives issues from the building. Year in, year out, the engine in the same factory starts up at say six o'clock in the morning, and at once a hundred machines throughout the building begin to spin or knit or weave. Here are two sets of sequences; but of one you say, it is mere sequence, — of the other, it is cause and effect. Why this difference, if you know nothing but sequence? Experience, observation? But experience, as Hume truly says,

tells us nothing about the nature of that which connects cause and effect. On the other hand, while experience *is* needed to assure us that night will follow day, and that the operatives will take their nooning as soon as the bell rings, it is not needed to teach us that, if machines spin or weave or make watches, there is a cause, a whole series of causes, for it. Even a child, whose prior experience is null, if it burn a finger in the flame of a candle, does not need to burn itself a second time to know that the pain is an effect and the flame a cause. It has an innate sense of efficiency long before it understands the meaning of the words "cause and effect." Between cause and effect the mind apprehends a necessary connection, so that if one be present the absence of the other is felt to be impossible, unthinkable. Not so with mere sequence. I can think of summer and winter as existing apart, as they actually do under the equator and at the poles; but I cannot think that a new life springs into being, or that a boulder changes its place, without a cause.

Another objection is that of Kant, who asserts that the "principle of causality is valid only within the field of experiences, but inapplicable, yea meaningless, beyond it." But since the principle of causality is in no way indebted for its authority to experience, it is difficult to see why its validity

should be limited to the field of experience. Certainly, the mind is aware of no such limitation, but as the author of the "Critical Philosophy" himself says, urgently demands to find repose in a first cause. The principle is a law of mind, with the origin of which neither human thought nor human experience had anything to do. Experience merely furnishes the occasions on which it asserts itself; and it does that as strongly when, in the regress of thought, it reaches the first link in the chain of causation, as when it contemplates the latest change that falls under its notice. True, no sense-perception can trace the first physical effect that ever took place in the world to its supersensuous cause. The physical trail breaks off where the first physical effect begins; but the innate conception of causality is as clear and imperious at that point as at any other. And though it may be urged that the concept of causality is called into play only by phenomena, concerning the realities back of which we know nothing, yet that which it demands, efficiency, is confessedly not phenomenal, but an attribute of the otherwise perhaps unknown reality. It would seem, therefore, that to refuse credence to that necessity of mind which the principle expresses when it leads across the boundary of experience, is to discredit it in all its utterances, and in fact to make knowledge of any kind impossible.

But the objection may be urged in another way.[1] It may be said that that which connects cause and effect in the physical world is the transition of physical force; and that from the prime physical impulse we cannot pass to a spiritual power without leaping a chasm. But we do make this leap — if leap it be — every time we reason from some physical effect, say a painting or a statue, to an antecedent act of spiritual power in man. The objection assumes that the demand for a cause, which the mind necessarily makes in the presence of an effect, is a demand for a cause of the same nature with the object in which the effect is wrought. But this is not the case. When we see an effect, a movement or change of any kind, we know there is a cause for it, although we may not know what the cause is, or where it is. Concerning its nature, we do not necessarily make any affirmation whatever. When in the morning I find that my boat, which last night I saw riding safely at its mooring in the stream, has disappeared, I know that some cause has removed or set it adrift; but until I investigate I do not know whether that cause was physical or spiritual, — whether it was a violent squall that passed while I slept, an unusually high and heavy tide, a piece of entangled driftwood that chafed and parted the mooring-rope, or a knife in a human

[1] Cf. Mulford, *Republic of God*, p. 7 f.

hand, directed and impelled by a human will, *i. e.* by a spiritual power. The only thing of which I am absolutely certain is that some cause, equal to the effect, has removed the boat from its place. So, when I see the change from summer to winter, or the converse, I know that there is a cause for it; but I do not know that the cause is physical, until I am told of the inclination of the equator to the ecliptic, and its consequences. Until thus instructed, I might imagine that it was effected by the energy of gnomes or earth-spirits. The innate idea of causality, as such, makes no distinction between physical and spiritual energy. Nor, indeed, can we. When we speak of physical and spiritual causes, we classify, not the force or energy, but the substance or being in which it inheres. Of energy we have no conception at all, except as the source of motion; and that we have only because we are conscious of exerting energy ourselves.

Let us now cast a reviewing glance over the argument, and see what we have gained. We have found that the presence of motion, change, life, and decay in the world involve the existence of a self-existent first cause or causes. This conclusion has the highest possible certitude for us, because it is the unequivocal deliverance of a principle inherent in our mental constitution. It is true that a self-existent first cause is as inconceivable to us as a

self-existent universe;[1] but it is not the inconceivable, in the proper sense of the word, of which the idea of causality takes cognizance. It applies only to whatever had a beginning, and is satisfied when it reaches that which had no beginning. As for the difficulty of the idea of the creation of matter, the raw material of the universe, the non-eternity of which is not apparent, it does not concern us here. We make no claim that the cosmological argument infers more than a self-existent fashioner of the cosmos.

We have found, secondly, that the self-existent cause or causes must be conceived of as personal. This, if not directly expressed by the idea of causality, is legitimately deducible from it, and appears no less certain than the preceding conclusion.

And, thirdly, we have found good reason to conclude that there are not first causes, but one only First Cause. The ground for this is furnished by the unity of the cosmos, notwithstanding its many contrarieties. It is therefore established just so far as that unity can be proved, and no farther. The originally strong presumption for it has hitherto increased as physical science has advanced, and may be expected to do so in the future. The conclusion founded upon it may therefore be described as highly probable, but not, as yet, demonstrative.

[1] Cf. Hedge, *Ways of the Spirit*, p. 149.

We find, then, as the result of the cosmological argument, taken by itself, that there is a self-existent personal First Cause of the physical universe, and with only less certainty that there is but one.

But does the argument also justify the conclusion that the one, personal First Cause exists independently of the universe, — that he is, in that sense, an extra-mundane being? Pantheism says, No! It admits an eternal first cause, but finds it in the world itself, taken as substance. The phenomenal world, it says, is indeed contingent, dependent, perishable, — always beginning and always ending; but the real world, back of the phenomenal, is eternal and self-existent. It is an ocean of being, out of which, by the necessity of its immutable nature, all forms of life emerge, and into which they return. To this I reply that, if the world be such as pantheism regards it, it must be a personal being. The personality of the First Cause has, I think, been already shown to follow from our conception of causality; but a word or two more may here be added. The mind rests satisfied in no impersonal, unconscious cause. Such a cause we call intermediate, meaning thereby that it is but a storage-point of energy, received, held, and expended under fixed conditions. The whole complex of causal sequences in the unconscious world seems to be but a gigantic system of powerful ma-

chinery, of which every wheel and cog, every shaft and belt, confesses — the source of power is not in me. In other words, the mind finds no explanation of the origin of power or energy until it comes to something like itself, — *i. e.* personal being. Therefore, the world, if it be the sum and source of being, should be personal. But is it? Does the universe, so far as we know it, produce the impression of self-conscious personality? Does it not at every point produce the opposite impression? Notwithstanding all its beauty, order, stability, and sublimity, does it not, apart from the thought of God, impress us as cold and heartless; unfree, nay, fettered, and blindly moving in endless cycles, without aim or purpose? Do we not know that, just so far as we ourselves are included in the cosmic mechanism, we are repressed, bound, and enslaved, with scarce a joy in life save that which springs from the possession of personality, which, while it lasts, lifts us a little above the physical process, and gives us a taste of freedom and independence of material conditions? The answer, I know, does not demonstrate the impossibility of the pantheistic assumption; but until that assumption is backed by stronger evidence than has ever yet been brought for it, it may be considered to turn the scales. And so we may add that the eternal First Cause of the universe is not a part of the uni-

verse itself, not a world-soul, but a super-cosmic being. Have we, then, proved the existence, not of a god, but of God? the Christian God? By no means. The argument from causality can never prove a cause whose measure exceeds the measure of the effect. Whether the Maker of the physical universe be or be not equal to other effects, infinitely higher and grander, is a question as to which the cosmological argument is utterly dumb. And it is only by a glaring *non sequitur*, by which the argument itself has been unjustly discredited, that theologians have so generally drawn from it the full conclusion that God, our God, is. The fact, singular as it seems, is easily explained. The mind, said Tertullian, is naturally Christian. So we may say, the mind naturally inclines to believe in God, infinite in being and perfections, and, in its eagerness to find and point him out, forgets to watch and weigh, at every step, the processes of its reasoning.

We turn next to the teleological, or, as it is also termed, the physico-theological argument. Here the reasoning is from the presence of design in the world to a designer. In the constitution of the world, — thus runs this argument, — there is everywhere adaptation of means to ends; therefore the universe was constructed by an intelligent designer.

Peculiarly adapted to the Greek mind, because related to the perception of measure, proportion, and beauty in physical forms, for which the Greeks had keen eyes, it was already used by Socrates, in the fifth century B. C. And the conception of God to which it leads, as working according to weight and measure, is, as Dorner points out,[1] found a century earlier in the second Isaiah, and before him in the book of Job. It cannot, however, have suggested itself to the untutored mind nearly so early as the argument from causality. It presupposes higher development of thought and more extended habits of reflection. The child of to-day apprehends the working of causality in nature long before it perceives that of design. The same must have been true of primitive man. The inseparable connection of causal force with every instance of design or purpose carried into effect — the necessary condition under which alone we can recognize previously existing design — is apt to put a stop to all further investigation by the ordinary mind. Even the cultivated mind is not so immediately impressed by design as by causality. A person sees for the first time a piece of mechanism — say a stocking-knitter. He thinks at once, Somebody made it, and asks, Who? That question answered, he probably feels satisfied. He

[1] *Glaubenslehre*, i. p. 259.

thinks it will save work and make stockings cheaper, and goes his way. Of the intelligence involved in the machine, of the curious adaptation of part to part for the automatic production of a thing of such peculiar shape, he takes but small if any note, unless he be, as we say, of a mechanical turn of mind. It is in that way that nine persons out of ten gaze on the constructions of an exhibition of machinery. And though the tenth may be instantly impressed by the marks of intelligence, he can form no adequate conception of the amount and quality of that intelligence, until after minute examination of the machine and careful reflection. If such be the case when the mechanism is so compact as to be visible in all its parts at once, how much less probably will the observation of intelligence occupy the foreground when the parts are scattered over miles of distance, and can only with difficulty be combined in one mental image. Who of you when he first beheld an electric light, an effect the producing cause of which was far away, thought of the intelligence behind it? You thought of its intensity, its disagreeable color, the density of the shadow it cast, — of everything but the inferences it warranted as to its maker's characteristics. It was under similar circumstances that primitive men looked upon the universe, except — and that made the result in their case the more

inevitable — that they did not behold it first in mature years, so as to be roused by the shock of novelty and surprise. Ages must have elapsed before accidental discoveries and occasional flashes of insight connected some distant or for other reasons previously unobserved causes with present useful effects, to such an extent, and in such a way, as to suggest to them that their god or gods made use of contrivances, employed means for preconceived ends, as they themselves built huts for shelter, constructed traps to catch game, and fashioned weapons for war and tools for work. Probably the greatest obstacle to this advance in knowledge was the habit of early men of endowing almost every natural object with life and powers like their own. That habit had to be given up, as to any given object, before it could occur to any one to regard the object as the means or instrument by which a higher being produced some useful end. That done, it is not difficult to conceive what would follow. The dark rain-cloud, *e. g.*, rising on the horizon, no larger than a man's hand, advancing swiftly, and expanding until it covered the whole sky, and distilled its waters over all the region, refreshing grass and grain, man and his herds, — seen, perhaps, for the hundredth time by the same eyes, — at last awakened in some thoughtful mind the notion of design: What an admirable contri-

vance for bringing water from afar! Once started on this track, other contrivances were speedily discovered. The river near by had been traced for long distances far into the mountains, through deep, rocky defiles, to brook-fed pools and lakes which furnished its unfailing streams. Here also contrivance was now seen. Thus men went on, discovering ever new instances of adaptation of means to ends, some beneficial, others hurtful, or one or other by turns; and the inference was forced upon them that the higher powers, whether propitious or angry, were all and always intelligent and wise.

It would be impracticable, as well as superfluous, to attempt even an outline of the evidence of design in nature, as it lies before the human mind to-day. Whole volumes have been filled with proofs afforded by different minute portions of the universal system. There is not a spot in heaven or on earth, to which telescope or microscope can reach, that does not reveal what, in its ordinary mood, the mind unhesitatingly recognizes as design. Nor is there a living organism, whether vegetable or animal, — in the air, on the land, in the water, — that does not exhibit, as a whole and in all its component parts, the marks of careful adaptation. More than this: As in the individual organism the several parts are not ends in them-

selves, but rather means in relation to the whole, so the individual is again a means to the species from which it springs, the species to the genus, the genus to the order, and the order to every other order; so that the world of organic objects presents a network of adaptations, running in every direction, crossing and recrossing, acting and reacting. And yet, while everything is thus acting on everything else, closely or remotely, there is a rising scale of existence, a steady progression from lower to higher organisms, the less perfect of which exist as means to the more perfect, until it culminates in man, for whose production, sustenance, and advancement all else exists.

This is enough to indicate the nature and range of the argument. Let us listen to the objections made against it. They are at bottom but two. The first, while admitting the prevalence of *adaptation* (*i. e.*, adaptedness), denies that it proves *design;* the second contends that if there be design, it is so far from universal, and in so many instances fails of beneficent result, as to vitiate the theological conclusion drawn from it.

The mere denial of telic causes or final ends in nature can of course be taken only for what it is worth. Spinoza declared them to be nothing but figments of the imagination. All pantheists, as such, are obliged to take similar ground; for tele-

ology is wholly inconsistent with their tenet of the identity of God and nature. The World-Spirit, not being self-conscious, still less self-determining, cannot be conceived to form purposes and pursue them. The admission of design is in fact so fatal to the doctrine of pantheists that their denial of it is not a serious difficulty in the way of theism. The case might stand differently, perhaps, if pantheism rested on more solid grounds, and gave more satisfactory explanations of existence, than it does. However that may be, no mere denial is of value. Nor is it to the purpose to dress the denial in much-promising but really empty phraseology. We see, or think we see, abundant evidence in the physical universe of careful adjustment of means to ends. Thoughtful and observant men of all lands and ages have thought the same. If this belief be a mistake, the cause of that mistake, and its explanation, ought to be pointed out. We have, moreover, a right to demand that some other and better way of accounting for the facts of the universe shall be suggested.

Pantheism, as such, does not do this; but individuals, whether pantheists, agnostics, or theists, make at least attempts to do it. Two of these are worthy of attention: the first would clear the world of final causes by pronouncing adaptations, the presence of which no one can deny, to be noth-

ing else than conditions of existence. An organism, a tree, or an animal, being what it is, can exist only under certain conditions, say of soil, light, air, temperature, food, and drink. Of course, therefore, if a tree or an animal exist, these conditions are found; but beyond that you know nothing. Some years ago I read an article, in a British review, which presented this objection in an interesting form. The writer thought to demolish teleology by imagining the maggot in a cheese to say to itself, "What a good world this, in which I find myself! How well adapted to my needs, and how evidently made for me!" And yet, said the author, what the maggot finds is nothing but the conditions that make his existence possible!

The illustration is well adapted to mislead. For unless the reader be on the alert, he is likely to think of the dairyman, who certainly had no intentions favorable to the maggot, as the maker of the cheese, and then the maggot's reasoning is sufficiently absurd. But the real maker of the cheese is the author of those chemical properties of milk and rennet, by the combination of which curds are formed, and of whose action the dairyman merely availed himself. Bearing that in mind, the maggot's philosophy is more rational than that of his critic. At any rate, the critic, without intending it, confesses that he can suggest no better. No

doubt, adaptation *is* a condition of existence; but while the maggot goes on to ask after the origin of this adaptation, the critic seems to think the whole problem solved by the magic of a phrase, — condition of existence. But existence and its conditions are the very things to be accounted for. Whence the conditions? Whence the organic being that lives under them? If there be no designer, who made both and adjusted them to each other, there are, so far as I can see, but three conceivable modes of bringing maggot and cheese together. We may suppose, in the first place, — leaving the cheese still unaccounted for, — that the maggot, under the favoring influence of some accidental quality in the cheese, not designed for any such purpose, springs into being spontaneously. But although we once heard much about spontaneous generation, it is, I believe, to-day one of the dead and forgotten children of "the scientific imagination," buried without even a headstone to mark its place of repose. Or we may suppose, secondly, that both the cheese and its inhabitant are the chance result of an original blind concourse of atoms; or, lastly, that both separately and in their mutual relations, they are a passing phase assumed by a portion of the one universal substance — call it matter or God — whose life is one eternal process of evolution and involution according to

its own inherent and necessary laws. The chance-solution might not seem irrational in this instance of the maggot and the cheese. The creature, whatever its use may be, is an object of disgust, which one would willingly give up to chance. But what if the chance-theory be extended to the universe as a whole? Pantheism, with its unconscious substance, flashing out on every side into conscious, thinking existences, is rationality itself compared with this absurdity.

The objection is not essentially altered when we are told that in finding design back of the adaptations in nature, we merely import our own subjectivity into nature, — in other words, that we infer design in nature simply because we are conscious of it in ourselves when we build a house, construct an engine, or use any contrivance whatever for a given end. It is doubtless true that any view of the universe is radically defective which regards it as a mere machine, contrived by a Power wholly outside of it, for the attainment of preconceived ends. There is indeed a sense in which it must be said that "the universe is not a machine, but an organism, with an indwelling principle of life," and "that it was not made, but has grown." [1] But it does not follow from that that the mind can rest in the assumption that it had no Maker. Dr.

[1] Fiske, *Idea of God*, p. 131.

Hedge[1] thinks that "if we came to the contemplation of nature without the idea of God in our minds, we should not view it as cunning mechanism, or at all as something created by antecedent power, but rather as a self-subsisting whole. The question of its origin would hardly force itself upon us; we should accept it as it is, and suppose it to have been always as it is, and self-perpetuating. But if the cosmological argument has any bases in truth, this is precisely what we should not and could not do. And if that be not enough, the conscious possession by us as personal beings of a degree of independence of all things else makes it forever impossible to regard the universe as a self-existent and self-perpetuating living entity of which we ourselves are but organic parts.

The other method of banishing final causes is to make them incompatible with efficient, producing causes. The force that works in the physical world, it is said, is mechanical, unintelligent, and therefore excludes design. It works with absolute, undeviating regularity, goes out of its way for neither king nor beggar, is as blind and deaf to the tears and groans of a smitten nation as to the life of an insect; what room is there there for the operation of final causes? I can hardly understand the logic of this objection, unless it tacitly

[1] *Ways of the Spirit*, p. 158.

assumes that there is or can be nothing over or back of the mechanical force, or else that teleology necessarily involves interference with the stable order of nature. The objection suggests more than one question which it would be interesting to pursue. What is the nature of the force that works in the physical universe? Does it belong to matter as matter? Assume that it does, then how did matter get this force? If matter was created, then of course the creator imparted it. But we have no right to assume the creation of matter. If, on the other hand, we suppose it to be uncreated, two possibilities still exist: either matter had this force eternally, in its own right and by its own nature, or it did not have it in its original condition, but received it as a *donum superadditum* from the world-builder. In the former case, — to say nothing now of the fact that this would involve a beginningless, constantly proceeding evolution of finite things, — what reason is there to assume that a sufficient, intelligent Power could not *direct* the energies of matter towards the attainment of his own purposes, a thing which man does every time he constructs a mill-wheel or a steam-engine? In the latter, what shall hinder us from believing that a Power great enough to give to matter the force now inherent in it did not merely direct it to his own purposes, but actually

made the automatic working out of all his plans the inevitable goal of the force he bestowed? so that, if we chose, we might conceive him as resting in perfect oblivion of his great machine, and yet believe most firmly in final causes?

The truth is, that when the existence of a First Cause (or Causes) has once been recognized by thought as absolutely necessary, the presence of purpose throughout the physical universe, and especially throughout the boundless ranges of organic beings, is so overwhelmingly evident that few philosophers of note have ever thought of doubting it. Not only Kant and Schelling and Hegel, but Schopenhauer and Hartmann, admit it not merely, but vie with each other in pointing it out. Testimony such as this, inspired by no theological bias, for the most part, indeed, accompanied with express denial of the theological conclusion drawn from it, is surely as authoritative as that of human thought can be. The universe may be full of mechanical causes — although I confess that I can form no idea of their nature, unless they are manifestations of divine energy, and then "mechanical" is not a good description of them; but whatever their nature, they are working under a yoke imposed by intelligence for clearly defined purposes. And no scientific theories of how the several parts of the cosmos arose can obscure this fact. Assume that

the stellar worlds were made out of star-dust or fire-mist, and that all forms of organic life that have ever existed sprang by slow evolution from one infinitesimal atom of protoplasm or from a single microscopic life-cell, then how grand beyond all power of human conception was the mind that put into the fire-mist and the cell — or, if you please, into the whole mass of matter that evolved the mist and cell — all that has come forth from them!

The last objection to the teleological argument to be noticed is that it is incomplete, and therefore inconclusive. It is indeed incomplete in the sense that it rests on an induction far from exhaustive; but is it therefore inconclusive? How much of what is universally accepted as absolutely certain in physical science rests on even approximately exhaustive induction? But there may be incompleteness of another kind. It is urged that in many instances the adaptation of means to ends in nature is imperfect, not being the best conceivable; that the result supposed to be aimed at is reached in comparatively few individuals of a class, say in a thousand fruit-blossoms out of a million, in one infant out of a hundred that are born; that there are destructive as well as constructive exhibitions of energy, hideous deformity as well as beauty, cruelty as well as beneficence. All this is stated

by Dr. Mulford[1] with great force; and all this has been felt for ages. It drove men to worship demons as well as gods, — to set Ahriman on a throne almost as high and eternal as that of Ahura-Mazda. But does it necessarily conflict with the assumption of an intelligent world-designer? If out of a million of apple-blossoms only a thousand grow into perfect fruit, may not the remaining thousands serve well-devised purposes, perchance even aiding, directly or indirectly, in the perfecting of their fellows? Is there no reason to believe that what to us is hideous and discordant in nature raises the value and efficiency of the beautiful and harmonious? Are we so thoroughly acquainted with even that part of the organic world of which we know most, and with all its bearings on ultimate results, as to entitle us to pronounce anything absolutely useless, hideous, or cruel? However that question may be answered, it cannot be denied that even what we call hideous and cruel is full of intelligent adaptation. There is in it not a trace of ignorance or weakness. It was intended to be what it is, and fashioned for what it does. Its ultimate end only is hidden from us.

The thing too often forgotten by both elaborators and critics of the teleological argument is its limited scope. It is not in itself capable of prov-

[1] *Republic of God*, p. 8 ff.

ing the existence of a First Cause, — although it furnishes strong corroborative evidence for that position, — much less that of God, in the highest sense of that word, as the Holy and the Good. Dr. Mulford is right when he says that the "physical process" is devoid of the moral element. Strong as it is, the expression, rigidly construed, is not too strong. The physical process is just as *un*moral (observe, not *im*moral) as the steam-engine or the electric current. Physical teleology alone certainly does not lead us to a moral author of the world, nor to one that is absolutely good and kind. And that because it leaves the ultimate end for which the world exists in obscurity. It shows us clearly that all organic life leads up to man, and exists for him; but there it stops. It shows us man as the aim of creation, from the first reduction of chaos until now, but does not tell us what is the end of his existence. He lives and dies like every other creature; he lives in toil and sorrow beyond every other creature; why was he made? what was the Maker's final purpose, his last and highest aim, to which the whole creation tends? To that question, *the* question of human existence, physical teleology gives no answer. The answer is found in man's moral nature; but as a moral being, man is outside of physical nature, — not wholly independent of it, but by his personality and free-

dom superior to it. So far, then, as he is independent, free, and superior to the mechanism of nature, he is not comprehended within its physical teleology. In this sense, it is true that the physical process is devoid of the moral. There is in nature much that suggests the moral; but before we can receive its suggestions, we must get our idea of the moral character of nature's Maker from another source.

The true scope of teleology is that it exhibits the First Cause to be an intelligent and intellectually powerful being. Moreover, it corroborates most strongly the reasoning against the pantheistic identification of God and the universe, in that it makes the self-consciousness of the First Cause absolutely certain; for no unconscious being can make plans and adapt means to their attainment. But it does not go beyond the physical cosmos. It proves an intelligent world-maker or, more accurately, world-builder, — for as to the origin of matter teleology has nothing to say; it shows him to be possessed of inconceivably great resources of intelligence, foresight, and adaptation. There its conclusion ends. We cannot logically extend it beyond the premises on which it rests, and say, as Dr. Hodge does,[1] "incomprehensibly great and infinitely great are practically equivalent," and

[1] *Systematic Theology*, i. 229.

then claim that the argument proves an infinite God. The greatness it proves is indeed overpowering to mortal thought; and few, perhaps, except minds trained in this kind of reasoning, would hesitate to accept it as infinite, in spite of the logical deficiency; nevertheless, the deficiency exists; and its unconditional recognition will help us both to understand the difficulties of other minds, and to make our own position clearer and more rational, if not convincing, to them.

LECTURE III.

THE MORAL AND ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS.

We come now to the third proof of the existence of God, — that derived from the moral nature of man. Much less attention has been given in the schools to this argument than to those already considered. It is looked for in vain in many treatises on theology, even after Kant had declared it to be the *only*, but all-sufficient ground, for rational belief in God. Yet the moral force on which it builds, to wit, conscience, has undoubtedly in all ages, from the very earliest date of man's existence *as a moral being*, been the most efficient revealer of God and his existence. Wherever we get a glimpse of living men, we find them beings whose reasonings, as St. Paul expresses it, are much given to accusing and excusing each other and — what is even more to the point — themselves. We find in them all alike the sense of right and wrong; consciousness of happiness in the doing of the one, and of poignant remorse and fearful apprehension attendant on the other. From this experience, what more natural than the inference that there

is a power above man that loves and rewards that which is good, and hates and punishes that which is evil, — especially as men so often felt themselves at variance with the moral direction, and thus were forced to ascribe its voice to something outside of themselves. The facts came home to every man in his own daily experience. They needed no lengthened observation and reflection to bring them to light. They suggested their conclusion with a power and directness far exceeding that which attended the inferences from the changeableness of the world and the presence of design. They furnished, if not the earliest, certainly the most efficient, suggestion to men of an authority independent of and above men. If philosophers paid small regard to them, the reason may perhaps be found in the universality and simplicity of the facts, which seemed to leave nothing for the profoundly philosophical mind to exercise itself upon.

Concerning the foundation fact of this argument there is and can be no dispute. There is in every human being something that passes judgment on his actions, and says, You ought, or You ought not, as occasion requires. We call it "conscience," or more exactly, the moral sense. Its deliverances, we all know from experience, are ordinarily prompt, clear, and persistent. Thus far all are agreed. But can we thence infer the existence of

a moral being who is the author of this moral sense in us? Here opinions diverge. It is pointed out that, in order to be a truly moral being, man must himself make, or at least freely adopt, the moral law under which he lives. If that law be imposed upon him as authoritative by another, it may give to his actions the outward show and semblance of morality, but not its reality. Nor is it necessary to this result that man should be deprived of the power to choose and do the immoral. That is to say, it is not at all necessary that he should be reduced to a mere automaton, unconsciously working what has the appearance of being good. It is enough if the outside moral power wins him over by promises of good or threats of evil. The only really moral being is one who pursues the right because it is right and as such valuable, — who would pursue it even if it brought him misery instead of happiness. A bought or enforced morality is a spurious morality. If man's morality be true morality, it must originate within him, and consequently cannot testify to a moral lawgiver outside of him. The argument from conscience can be valid only at the expense of genuine morality itself. And if man's morality be spurious, what sort of inference can be drawn from it as to a higher moral being?

The objection thus stated must be allowed. But

it derives its force from the indefiniteness of the term "moral law." What do we mean by it, or rather what should we mean by it, when we speak of it as imposed upon man or implanted in him? Nothing more, I apprehend, than the bare, undeveloped, and at the outset inactive and latent faculty of making moral distinctions, — of seeing differences between right and wrong. We certainly do not mean that every man is born with a knowledge of the decalogue or any other compendium of moral law. History shows wide divergences among men as to what is or is not moral. What is considered right in one age or country is wrong elsewhere or at another time. This holds not only when we compare savage tribes with Christian nations, but also when savage tribe is compared with savage tribe and Christian nation with Christian nation. The frequency of persecution for conscience' sake, and the heroism with which it is endured, prove the strength of the convictions held by conscience, but also the variability of its utterances; for persecutors have consciences as well as persecuted. That which we bring with us when we enter the world is, in the first place, the latent notion of abstract right and wrong; and in the second place, the undeveloped faculty of applying this notion in judging of actions. It is at first neither in exercise, nor has it in itself any-

thing to exercise itself on. The moral sense is, in these respects, in the same condition as the truth sense, *i. e.*, the reason and understanding. That, too, is at the outset an unawakened possibility, subsequently supplied with material on which to work by the external world. The same is true of all our physical senses. The eye and ear must have objects presented to them before they can see or hear; and, what is not less to be considered, they must also learn to see and hear aright, — *i. e.* they must learn so to see and hear as to judge accurately of the nature of the objects seen or heard. Now when the moral sense, in the course of the individual's development, is brought face to face with actions, how does it recognize them as right or wrong? Not immediately by its own intuition, for then there could be no diversity of moral judgment, but by the aid of the understanding. The understanding points out the consequences of actions, hurtful or helpful, to others; and in view of these consequences, the moral sense declares them right or wrong. The understanding says, If I take this man's bread, his wife and children must suffer hunger; whereupon conscience declares, It would be wrong — you must not do it. The understanding says, This man's house is on fire; if I put it out, I shall save his goods and insure his comfort and happiness; and conscience

instantly concludes, That is right — do it. Back of the reasoning, in both instances, there lies the conviction, itself the outcome of previous social experiences, that I ought to treat my fellows as I would have them treat me. The social life, you see, from the first has acted on the understanding, and the understanding has so presented questions to the moral sense as to elicit its answers. All three acting together, — social life, the understanding, and the moral sense, — acting together, yet each in its own sphere, formed in time categories or catalogues of actions which were henceforth instantly felt to be right or wrong, needed not to be reasoned out again, but became the ready-made contents of the conscience of succeeding generations. This conjoint growth of society, the intellectual powers and the moral sense, explains the partial diversity, but also the ever-growing sweep and unanimity, of men's moral judgments. As to the pleasure and pain that attend right and wrong doing, they are not more inconsistent with free self-determination than the physical comfort or distress incident to many actions. Gently inciting or deterring, they guard the moral nature against injury through heedlessness, without overbearing whatever considerations may suggest the opposite course. The greater positive awards of prosperity and happiness, or punishment and misery, either in

this or a future life, are not parts of the natural moral law, but grow out of the reasonings of men on the attitude which God must hold towards right and wrong. They show that men, as soon as they believe in a God, believe him to be the conservator of moral order ; but they do not authenticate themselves as immediate moral intuitions. Hence, of these hopes and fears men may rid themselves, and do rid themselves, when they cease to believe in a personal God and his providential government of the world ; but they do not thereby, and they never can, lose the sense of right and wrong, and the present peace or discomfort, that attends all moral actions.

But it may seem that while we have thus made man develop for himself the contents of the moral law under which he lives, and have thereby shown him to be free from moral compulsion, we have reduced the moral element to mere social expediency or utility. This, however, does not follow. When stealing was seen to be subversive of society, and the understanding brought it to the notice of the moral sense, the latter, in declaring it *wrong*, made an affirmation which the intellectual faculty cannot make. It introduced a wholly new and distinct element into the judgment. The understanding may say, This is true, useful, expedient, — these are the elements, the categories, as philosophers

say, about which the understanding is conversant; it cannot say, This is right, or, This is wrong; for the same reason that the eye cannot say, This is loud; or the ear, This is red; or the touch, This is sweet. The intellect, as such, knows nothing of right or wrong. The social emergency does not create the moral judgment. It merely furnishes the occasion for the moral sense to act, just as the perceptions of the physical senses give occasion for the intellect to work.

That the moral sense cannot be the outcome of nature, *i. e.* of anything short of a power superior to nature and not part of it, is almost too evident to need elucidation. Whence could it come? Is it imposed by the individual on himself? But the individual is frequently in flagrant rebellion against it, and yet cannot rid himself of it. It fills him, oftentimes with ceaseless misery, sometimes with bitter remorse. Is it the creature of human society? I have already shown that society fills out, progressively, the catalogues of actions that are right or wrong; but also that it cannot originate the distinction itself. Neither can it give to its laws that sanction of unconditional obligatoriness which never fails to attach to moral right. That is why a system of pretended Moral Philosophy, like Paley's, which accepts utilitarianism as its ultimate principle, is of no more worth or interest than a

book of municipal police regulations would be. No human legislation, no matter how high, can give the quality of immediately binding moral force to any law of its enactment not previously recognized as binding by the conscience. Can the moral, then, be derived from external nature? Nature, outside of man, has not the moral; how could it give what it has not itself? Moreover, the moral constantly bids us counteract the natural. It commands us to restrain and deny desires and impulses which nature as constantly bids us gratify without regard to anything but opportunity. The moral sense — no possibility for other conclusion is left — must come from a source outside of nature.

This same conclusion is reached in yet another way. Goodness is clearly the most valuable thing there is in the world. We are constrained by our moral perceptions to prize it above all else, and if need be to sacrifice all else to it, even life itself. It, and it alone, gives real dignity and value to life. So far as our physical constitution is concerned, we are nothing more than highly organized parts of the universal mechanism. Even while we subdue the forces of nature to our service, we are at best nothing more than self-acting switches by which the universal energy is turned in a particular direction. But our moral nature makes us free, so far as its power extends. It endows all our higher actions

with the dignity of responsibility. They cease to be the results of mere mechanism, or even of that intelligence which to a degree all animals share with us, and become expressions of true personality. If good, they are the noblest products of existence; if evil, its basest and most harmful monstrosities. Goodness, therefore, is the *summum bonum* of the universe; and as such entitled to rule and triumph. It must be intended to do so by whatever power made all things. Now, as there is much evil in the world, and as the powers of individual good men are unable to cope with this evil, the understanding infers that there must be a moral being who in some way will come to their aid. To the pessimist, who would deny this inference, and says that the triumph of goodness is a pleasing but delusive ideal, never to be realized, the understanding replies by pointing to history, marked by evident progress toward its attainment, and by great and terrible days of judgment on nations in whom evil-doing had left no sufficient powers of moral recuperation. Indeed, *all* history is one continuous day of judgment for the elimination and destruction of evil. The great catastrophes of invasions, wars, and revolutions, in which empires have been destroyed, dynasties overturned, and new nations created, are but the critical points of this process, — its great days of execution, so to

speak. The pessimist who denies this, or doubts it, needs to study history and the philosophy of history, before he can be reasoned with. But others, not pessimists, might say, All this is the outcome of the moral order of the universe. Very true. But what is this moral order of the universe? Does it inhere in the rocks and waves? Did it spring up in the bosom of chaos? Was it struck out by a fortuitous concourse of atoms? Has the chemist found it among his ultimate elements of matter? Moral order must manifestly be a quality of a moral being; and hence the admitted moral order of the universe proves the presence of a personal power who conserves moral order and has its triumph at heart — ay, and will secure it. *How* secure it is another question; but not, I think, a difficult one. Just as we concluded that the wise world-builder makes use of what, for convenience' sake, we call the mechanical force of the world to attain his plans and purposes, — puts his final ends, so to speak, into the mechanism itself, to be evolved by it in due time, — so the securing of the moral order, *i. e.* the supreme final end of the universe, was provided for in the mechanical constitution of the whole. "All things work together for good to them that love God" is a dictum of Christian theism that challenges the most unlimited application. All things tend in the

long run to conserve goodness and destroy wrong. The old feeling against which the book of Job contends so strenuously, that goodness must prosper and wickedness succumb, is after all a true one; it only failed in that it applied to the individual and his brief span of life, what God in history measures on a scale in which a century is but a fraction of the unit. Right *is* immortal, and wrong is finally self-destructive; the one, because it falls in with the course of the world's wisely arranged mechanism; the other, because it lives in heedless defiance of it, and is ultimately ground to powder by it.

The conclusion of the argument is that the author of the world is not only powerful and intelligent, but that he is a moral being; and not that only, but righteous. This reasoning, though perhaps less direct, or rather less readily grasped than that of previous arguments, I hold to be no less cogent and convincing. It requires a knowledge of history, and some insight into the governing forces of human life, to estimate it at its proper value; but once appreciated, it is invincible. And that, I think, the history-studying world has attested by the fact that it has allowed a book like Buckle's "History of Civilization in England," in which the attempt was made to construe history on the principles of mechanical forces alone, to the en-

tire exclusion of the moral, to find its place so speedily among the interesting failures of our libraries.[1]

But in addition to this main conclusion, the argument demonstrates a number of collateral points. And first it proves, what no previous argument established with equal clearness, the conscious personality of the Maker of all things. Nothing unconscious or impersonal can be moral. Therefore, pantheism, with its unconscious world-soul, is now seen to be an utterly inadequate explanation of a universe in which the moral holds so large a place. And secondly, it completes the argument from physico-teleology. Teleology, as we have seen, shows that man is the final end of all material things in this lower world; but it does not show what is the final end of man, the purpose for which he and all things exist. That question we can now answer: All things exist for man, and man exists because, a moral being like his Maker, he is designed to attain perfect goodness, absolute moral perfection. That purpose, and that alone, can to reason serve as the *raison d'être*, the final end, of this world. Thus the teleological argument is very much strengthened; but is it not also so enlarged in its scope as to suggest conclusions concerning

[1] Cf. Mulford, *The Nation*, p. 69 f.: "The history of the world cannot be deduced from its geography."

the nature of the world-maker which we could not hitherto reach? If the world-maker's ultimate end was the production of a moral being, perfect in goodness, can we conceive him to design such a being to fall back into dust and nothingness? There is nothing absolutely incongruous in the fact that you and I die like any beasts of the field. There would be nothing absolutely incongruous in the supposition that death is the last of us; that like the beasts of the field, and all other organic things, we have simply served as means to a higher end. For, though moral beings, we are far from perfect; and we can see no absolutely valid reason why any being less than perfect should be endowed with perpetual existence. It may be best to annihilate us altogether, so that no world in the vast universe shall know us more. But, when the perfected moral man has been evolved, let it be a million centuries hence, will the Maker then be content to have that perfect being sink back into nothingness? Will he be content with an endless succession of moral beings, each in turn reflecting his own moral perfections, and each in turn crumbling back into nonentity? Can that have been the final end he had in view when he built the world? Impossible: a succession of morally perfect beings is just as unthinkable as a final end, as a beautiful, but ever-perishing physical world can be that end. The

Maker, when he made moral beings his final end, must have had in view the immortality of perfected moral beings, — must have looked forward to their endless existence for endless purposes. And now I ask what does this imply as to his own consciousness of himself and his nature? Does it not imply that before the foundations of the world were laid the Maker was conscious of powers far transcending all temporary effects, and of existence stretching infinitely beyond all duration? If the world-builder was wise and intelligent, could he have so misconceived his own nature, or miscalculated his own power, as to adopt for his final end a purpose which required infinite time and inexhaustible power, if in fact he were finite and limited in power, or so conditioned by other beings or forces that he could not say, "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God." I do not claim that this corollary from the moral argument has apodictic force. Formal logic may find flaws in it; but I hold that its probability is so high as to be practically equivalent to demonstration, and that on this ground alone we may rationally conclude that the Great Moral First Cause and Wise World-builder is a being of unbounded power and freedom, untrammeled and unconditioned by any other force or being whatsoever.

The fourth argument is the famous one proposed by Anselm, afterwards archbishop of Canterbury. It has been named the Ontological, because, while the cosmological and teleological arguments set out from the phenomenal world, this builds on the idea of pure being. As given by Anselm, it runs in this wise: We believe God to be something than which nothing greater can be conceived. But that than which nothing greater can be conceived cannot exist in the mind only; for if it did, it would be possible to conceive it as existing not only in the mind, but also in reality, which would be to conceive something greater. Therefore, that than which nothing greater can be conceived must exist in fact as well as in thought, *i. e.* God exists not only as an ideal, but in reality.[1]

The fallaciousness of this argument has been pointed out a thousand times. It was already exposed by Gaunilo, a contemporary of Anselm, who asserted that if one had the idea of an island than which none could be more perfect, the same rea-

[1] Anselm's *Proslogion*, together with Gaunilo's reply to the above argument and Anselm's rejoinder, may be found translated in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for 1851, pp. 529 ff. and 699 ff. The argument of the earlier *Monologion* (frequently confounded with that of the *Proslogion*) has more affinity with the cosmological argument. Cf. Ueberweg, *Hist. Philos.*, i. 381 ff. The text of the *Proslogion* cited by Ueberweg is inferior to that given by Migne.

soning would establish its existence. Anselm rejoined that his argument could be applied to nothing whatever except the object to which he had applied it, — the one thing than which no greater can be conceived. This object, he said, must be without beginning, always and everywhere existent, since otherwise a greater might be conceived. But this reached only the form of Gaunilo's illustration; it failed to meet the real point of his objection, which is that the presence in the mind of the conception of the highest conceivable object does not prove its existence in reality. Nor is this the only hiatus in the Anselmic argument. For whence comes this conception of that than which nothing greater can be conceived? Anselm simply takes it as given — given in the Christian idea of God. But how is the conception thus given through faith to accredit itself to the reason?

Undeniably defective, the argument has nevertheless possessed wonderful fascination for innumerable philosophical thinkers. It has been felt that its author must have seen, or at least distantly apprehended, some profound truth, which his language somehow fails to set forth. Hence, although discarded for a time through the influence of Kant's "Critique of the Pure Reason," it has never fallen into the disrepute of mere sophistry. Men of the highest speculative powers, Descartes, Spi-

noza, Leibnitz, before Kant, and after him Hegel and a host of philosophical theologians down to Dorner and Pfleiderer, have endeavored so to interpret or reconstruct Anselm's reasoning as to eliminate its defects. It would be tedious and confusing to recount these efforts. Let me rather simply present that form, due not to one thinker, but to many, which commends itself to my own mind.

We shall find the Anselmic argument conclusive provided we assume, first, that the thought of the highest conceivable object, or what is the same thing, the absolutely perfect being, is a necessary thought; that it is not the offspring of an arbitrary effort of the imagination, as when I endeavor to conceive the most perfect possible island or cathedral, but that all true thinking presupposes it, and can neither escape from it, nor dispense with it. And secondly, that every necessary thought (necessary in the sense just explained), emerging in the process of thinking, and not to be set aside, is objectively valid — represents in the mind a reality outside of it.

Grant these two propositions, and the argument can be made good, as will appear if we reconstruct it thus: We have the idea of the most perfect being, than whom none more perfect can be conceived. As the most perfect conceivable, this being

is (as Anselm himself pointed out) dependent on no other for existence, and possesses all possible excellences in absolute perfection. We have this idea not because we choose to set it up, but because it is inwrought in our mental constitution, and comes forth into consciousness more and more clearly in proportion as our thinking penetrates more deeply into the laws of its own activity. It is therefore a necessary idea, and as such objectively true. Therefore, the absolutely perfect being exists, — and that being is — God.

The argument thus put is logical and conclusive. The question now is whether we can justify the two interpolated propositions: that the idea is necessary, and as such objectively true.

As to the first, Kant, probably the greatest analyst and critic of thought and thinking that ever lived, says, Yes; the mind unavoidably forms, or rather comes to, the idea of the absolutely perfect being, the source of all that is or can be, the totality of all reality and possibility. The reasoning by which he reaches this result is far too extended to be here intelligibly reproduced.[1] A few words of illustration may indicate its nature.

Did we enter life, not as infants, but as full-grown persons, with ready-trained perceptive facul-

[1] Cf. *Critique of the Pure Reason*, the section on the Transcendental Ideal; and Caird's *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, chapter x.

ties and fully developed consciousness, the first impression of the world we should get would be that of a vast collection of unconnected objects. It would be like the impression produced by a great museum where countless objects lie scattered about in utter confusion. But such is the constitution of the mind that it could not for one instant entertain the belief that that impression represented the true condition of things. An inwrought conviction that there must be order, nay, unity, would immediately assert itself, and set the mind to work to discover it. The understanding would examine things, compare object with object, inquire into their relations to each other, and make judgments (predicates) according to the data thus obtained. Not a month would pass before enough of knowledge had been gathered to verify the instinctive expectation, and give large glimpses of order, full of promise to further inquiry. Now it matters not that, entering the world as infants, we pass through this initial experience gradually and without subsequent knowledge of it. Its essential features remain the same: in the first place, we are irresistibly impelled to assume the existence of connection between the apparently unconnected, and of unity underneath all multiplicity; and, in the second place, we recognize that we know things by determining (defining) them, *i. e.* by what, on the

basis of experience, we are enabled to affirm or deny of them and their relations. The knowledge of the ordinary man, it is true, is largely desultory, too scanty and superficial to admit of more than rude attempts to combine its stores. Consequently it does not advance far on the road towards unity. Science, on the other hand, not only reduces large classes of objects into subordinate unities, but it discovers countless interconnections between the classes which point to a higher, all-comprehending unity. Indeed, it makes it manifest that science can never be truly science until it has ceased to be sciences. But the reason is not compelled to wait for that far-off consummation before it can find rest for itself. It finds it, as soon as the need of it becomes imperiously felt, in the idea of the absolute unity. This comprehensive, only universal idea is not originated by thought; it emerges, clothed with the supreme authority of necessity, when the mind contemplates its own activity. It is not a logical generalization, dependent for validity upon the completeness of induction and the accuracy of every one of countless myriads of inferences. That is the nature of the highest conclusions of what we call the sciences. The idea of the absolute unity exists potentially in the nature of the thinking Ego, although it needs the exercise of the analytic reason to occasion its conscious recogni-

tion. It is the ever-active regulative of all thinking, — its guide, stimulant, and critic, all in one. It is this to the casual observer of the phenomena of existence, and to the scientific investigator of nature, — neither of whom has perhaps ever heard of it, — as effectually as to the philosopher whose analysis of thought and thinking has brought him face to face with it.

But what is the process by which this innate function of the reason reveals itself in the form of an idea? I find, replies the thinker, that knowledge is determination; that nothing is completely known except in connection with the whole of existence. For every object is related, not only to itself, to the thinking mind that observes it, to the nearer circle of its immediate congeners, but also, through these, with everything that now exists or ever has existed. To know one I must know all. But as I can never fully explore infinite space to find the sum of all that is, nor travel back through time, along the line of successive existences *ad infinitum*, or until the beginning of all existence is reached, I am constrained to comprehend all that now exists or has existed in the concept of all that is possible. Complete knowledge of an object therefore implies complete determination of it in all its relations to the totality of possibility. Moreover, my partial knowledge is knowledge only so

far as it rightly apprehends those relations. That is to say, I find that all my knowledge, no matter how reached, presupposes and rests upon the idea of the totality of possibility. The categories under which all my judgments (predications) about objects fall, and from which they derive their authoritativeness, are themselves only partial exhibitions of this universal idea, in which alone they coalesce into unity. In the ultimate analysis, my knowledge of any object is, in fact, the resultant of successively applying to it all the predicates of the totality of possibility, and excluding those which it refuses. In the logic of the reason there is but one major premise, to which all other propositions (if their certitude is to be formally demonstrated) must be traced up through endless series of prosyllogisms.

Thus, by analyzing the process and content of my thinking, I have found the source and explanation of that persistent assumption of the unity of all things by which, consciously or unconsciously, I am ever led. I have found it in an idea which precedes all thinking, or, to speak more exactly, in a constitutional necessity of my rational nature which involves this idea, and out of which upon due occasion it issues forth into my consciousness as a clearly formed concept, marked with a logical necessity as strong as the constitutional necessity of

which it is the expression. The individual may never consciously think it; but when thought, it admits of neither doubt nor question.

Now, that the idea of the totality of possibility is the idea of a simple, indivisible whole, not of an aggregate of parts, is self-evident. The reason does not arbitrarily assume it in despair of proceeding beyond it, but finds it, and in finding it, obtains rest and satisfaction. It is the idea of a unity which excludes all composite multiplicity. So long as a mere aggregation is contemplated, it has not been found. It is the idea of one indivisible entity.

Further, the possibility is not empty logical possibility, but the real possibility of existence. It is what in philosophy is called the *ens realissimum*. It includes in itself all reality, or better, the ground of all possibility; for it furnishes the basis for all possible predicates concerning all possible existence.

As the ground of all reality, it is free, self-conscious, personal being; for self-conscious personality is to the mind the most real of all realities.

And finally, the *ens realissimum* is unconditioned, independent of anything outside of itself; for as it is itself the source and support of all reality, there is nothing by which it can be conditioned.

Thus we obtain as the content of the idea of the totality of possibility the concept of an uncondi-

tioned, individual, personal being which contains all the elements that enter into our idea of God. I add, though I trust it is needless, that the *historical* genesis of the idea of God is another matter altogether.

To this conclusion Kant fully assents. Indeed, the very reasoning by which we have reached it is only a very brief and (as I would fain believe) a more readily intelligible reproduction of his own. Nevertheless, he denies that it proves the existence of God. The idea of the *ens realissimum*, he says, is a necessary one; it is presupposed in all reasoning and regulates it; but reason gives it only *as* an idea, without requiring that all this reality shall be considered as objectively given and as being itself an object. In fact, no objects can be given us except objects of sense perception, or "anywhere but in the context of a possible experience."

It is not necessary to repeat what has so often been shown, that Kant's limitation of objective knowledge to the field of the empirical principle leads him into many inconsistencies with himself, and that he escapes from its serious consequences only by the questionable expedient of distinguishing between the pure and the practical reason. Pfleiderer puts the answer to the negation now before us in a nutshell.[1] The laws of thought are

[1] *Religionsphilosophie*, ii. 272 ff.; cf., also, i. 155 ff.

neither deductions from, nor generalizations of, experience. They antedate experience, and control all reasoning about experience. But they manifest their correspondence to the laws of existence by the constant verifications they receive when the mind busies itself about the latter. Celestial phenomena occur as predicted; the electric force transmits signs, illuminates streets, moves loads; and chemical properties produce results, such as were expected of them by the thinking mind under conditions devised by itself. How can this correspondence be explained? On no other assumption than that both the laws of thought and the laws of existence spring from one and the same Being, in whom thought and being are one. Not the empty thought of God, but the being of God, is the necessary presupposition of our thought-faculty.

LECTURE IV.

RECAPITULATION. — TRANSITION TO THE ATTRIBUTES.

When a ship has been at sea for some time, it takes the first favorable opportunity to ascertain its exact position and the progress it has made. It is time to recapitulate the course of reasoning we have followed and sum up its results. We have passed in review the four principal arguments by which the reason seeks to prove the existence of God. The first, the cosmological, starts from the transitoriness and dependence of all material existence. Everything that exists, being perishable, had a beginning as it has an end. But if something had not existed that had no beginning, nothing could now exist; for finite existence cannot begin without a cause. Therefore something has existed from eternity, by which all finite things have been brought into being. The only possible escape from this conclusion is to deny that anything does exist; but the denier cannot but admit that he himself exists, whereby he overthrows his own denial. The transitory material universe, there-

fore, demonstrates the existence of a First Cause — itself without a beginning, hence eternal, self-existent, and of power equal to the production of the universe. Besides this direct conclusion, the argument suggests two corollaries, the first of which can lay no claim to certainty, but only to a high degree of probability. It runs thus: This first cause is *one;* for the cosmos, regarded only as a vast organism, pervaded by force moving or acting under definite and stable laws, discloses to the mind ever more abundantly the evidences of its unity. It is one consistent whole, and calls for one producing cause. The second corollary is more absolutely conclusive: The first cause cannot be impersonal, physical energy; for first, whenever we see physical energy, our minds cast about for a personal being, a will, by whom that energy is either generated, directed, or set free; and secondly, no cause can impart what it has not in itself; yet we ourselves are products of the First Cause, and we are personal beings. Thus we have, as the direct result of the cosmological argument, the existence of an eternal, self-existent Cause; and by deduction from it, the probable oneness, and, may I not say, the certain personality of this First Cause.

Next came the teleological argument. It says, Everywhere in the constitution of the universe, we

perceive design, contrivance, the intelligent adaptation of means to ends; but design implies intelligence and self-determining will, *i. e.* personality; therefore the universe was constructed by a self-conscious personality of inconceivably great intelligence and intellectual power. Combine this conclusion with that from the cosmological argument, and we reach the existence of an eternal, self-existent First Cause, who is a personal being, of power and intelligence equal to the production of the cosmos. His personality, which in the previous argument we already inferred by a sure deduction, is here the main conclusion, and henceforth rests on a doubly strong foundation. But the other corollary which we there found, *viz.*, that the First Cause is one, is also greatly strengthened; for this unity is once more made highly probable by the fact which teleology all but demonstrates, that all final causes in nature have man for their ultimate end and aim. An infinite series of purposes, converging towards one result, can scarcely be conceived as the work of more than one mind. Finally, the *personality* of the First Cause, clearly proved by teleology, also justifies the further inference that the First Cause is not the world-soul of pantheism, but a being who is independent of the world; for the universe, regarded as an organism, a vast machine, if you will, affords no traces that we can see of consciousness or freedom in its action.

The moral argument proceeds in this wise: Man has a conscience, a moral sense, the origin of which cannot be ascribed to either the individual, society, or physical nature; it must have its source, therefore, in a power outside of all these. And that this power is the same as that which made the world is proven by the fact, attested by the history of individuals, communities, and nations, that the world as a whole is pervaded by a moral order — that its very mechanism is so directed as to cherish goodness and destroy wickedness. The maker of the world, when making it, had moral ends in view, and must therefore be a moral being. If anything more were needed to raise still higher the already double certainty of the personality of the First Cause, we have it here; for nothing impersonal, *i. e.* nothing devoid of self consciousness and freely working will, can be moral. Pantheism is hereby rendered impossible. The *unity* of the First Cause is also again, for the third time, strongly indicated. The accumulated argument is too strong to be resisted, although more direct evidence is yet to come: the power that organized the universe so that its mechanical forces subserve purposes infinitely various in themselves, yet all uniting for the attainment of the highest end conceivable, the promotion and protection of righteousness, must be one.

The conclusion resulting from all these lines of reasoning is, that there exists one First Cause, by whom all things were made; that he is self-existent, and therefore eternal; that he is a personal, moral, righteous being, not involved in nature or the world, but independent of it and superior to it, and of power and wisdom equal to the production of the universe.

The last words of this summing up indicate the remaining defect of the argument. It builds on the facts of the universe, and cannot get beyond their scope. It fails to prove the infinity of the First Cause. Not infinity in the temporal sense, — that is already expressed in his eternity, — but the infinity of his nature, faculties, and properties. In other words, it fails to prove the existence of a being independent of time and space, untrammeled by any imperfection in himself or by any power or being outside of himself, unlimited in life, power, and wisdom, — in short, absolutely unconditioned. And yet no first cause, however great and eternal, who is not all this, fills our conceptions of God.

I suggested in my last lecture, when treating of the moral argument, that the ultimate end of creation which it revealed — *viz.*, the production of perfect moral beings, whose destiny for endless existence reason can scarcely doubt — indicates the

world-maker's consciousness of power and independence far exceeding those to be inferred from the existing universe. In this there is a basis — and I cannot but think one of such high probability as to amount to practical certainty — on which to ground the yet needed element of absolute unconditionedness. At all events, it serves to prepare the mind for the ontological argument, and anticipatively to corroborate it. Accepting the latter argument, — the course of which is yet fresh in our memories, — we have found once more *implicite* all that we had previously gained, and in addition that which our previous findings lacked. The unconditioned being is one, unique, independent, unlimited. There is none above him, — there is none beside him. There is no fate, nor other form of external necessity, to limit his freedom. There is no power, whether of matter or of intelligent beings, to impede or thwart his will. He is unbounded might and wisdom and truth. To sum up all in one word, he is absolute life, the ever-flowing spring of being, — God.

To higher certainty than this, I, at least, cannot carry the reasoning; and here I should stop, but that at the outset I mentioned another argument, a fifth, — the historical. It cannot add to the scope of the conclusion, but may serve as a buttress in its support. A few words will suffice to indicate it.

There are several lines of reasoning comprehended under the general title "historical argument;" but the only one of logical value in this connection is that drawn from the general consent of mankind. Men have always and everywhere recognized God or gods. The exceptions, as to tribes, *if any*, are rare, and might without difficulty be accounted for; as to individuals, they form an insignificant fraction of the aggregate, and are even more easily explained. "All men," says Aristotle, "have a notion concerning gods." Maximus Tyrius, a philosopher of the second century before Christ, says: "Among barbarians there is not one who is ignorant of God." A Byzantine writer of the third century after Christ, Sextus Empiricus, says: "Almost all men, both Greeks and barbarians, hold the existence of Deity." And among the four proofs of the divine existence which he adduces, one is, "the agreement of all men." It were easy to collect many similar utterances, but let me finish with one from Cicero in his treatise "On the Nature of the Gods" (l. i., c. 16 f.), which not only states the fact, but shows its bearing: "What nation is there, or what race of men, that has not some notion of the gods, prior to all instruction? . . . Since, therefore, this opinion was not established by any institution, custom, or law, and continues to command the firm assent of all without

exception, it is impossible not to conclude that there are gods, seeing we have implanted (or, rather, innate) knowledge of them. That in which by nature all agree, must be true."

Cicero's reasoning is, in the main, that of all those theologians who, on whatever grounds, regard the arguments we have hitherto considered as inconclusive. They hold that the idea of God is an intuition, if not of the reason, of the moral nature. I have already given my reasons for not accepting this view. The proposition, God exists, is not, properly speaking, axiomatic. But the truth it declares is one which finds ready access to the mind. The thought it expresses is of the same nature with the idea of the most perfect possible being. In fact, it *is* that idea cast in popular form, and arrived at by popular and often very defective modes of thinking. But the very insufficiency of the thinking that leads to it shows how nearly it has attained to the character of an axiomatic truth. And hence it is a corroboration by the unschooled mind of the validity of the ontological argument. It is the utterance of the socially developed human consciousness, — a belief originally, it may be, evoked by reflection, confirmed by experience and observation, which has approved itself in life from generation to generation, and has thus become the firm conviction of the race, a part of the normal

human mental and moral outfit. That individual minds, possibly large multitudes, may cast it from them, proves nothing more than that it is not innate or axiomatic. That it misapprehends God, makes him human, cruel, savage; that it accepts not one God, but a hundred, and worships these under idolatrous forms, and but too often with repulsive rites, — shows, no doubt, that they who hold it are untutored of mind and spiritually barbarous, but does not alter the fact that they feel their dependence on higher powers, and have in them the germ and starting-point of the loftiest thought to which man can rise, — the thought of God.

It is not improbable that some who have listened to the arguments now concluded are disappointed in that they do not find their personal sense of certitude noticeably intensified, and are therefore inclined to sympathize with those who decry the value of the reasonings. I suspect that similar experiences of his own and others have led many a theologian to accept the notion that the existence of God is given by intuition. But what arguments on what subjects can strengthen convictions already immovably firm? Take the famous forty-seventh proposition in the first book of Euclid as an illustration. If by actual measurement you have become absolutely certain that in right-angled tri-

angles the square of the hypothenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides, what access of certainty can accrue to you from Euclid's demonstration? But the demonstration might nevertheless be helpful, if you had arrived at certainty without knowing how. And that would be a parallel to the case of the ordinary believer in God. We are certain, but we also wish to give a reason to ourselves for our certainty. We have the moral conviction; but we wish to give it its proper place in the whole of our knowledge, and therefore refer it to the scrutiny of the reason. And if the reason cannot so demonstrate it as to compel the assent at every step of every mind, we rest in the assurance that as its power in this field has grown in the past, so it will continue to grow in the future.

The remainder of the hour may suffice to prepare us for a brief survey of the Attributes of God. The creeds speak of but one, — almightiness, — "I believe in God the Father Almighty." We are not to infer, however, that no others were known or recognized in the early creed-making days. This one is brought forward because it prepares the way for the immediately following statement: "Maker of heaven and earth." When the "Apostles' Creed" was constructing, the interposition by Gnosticism of a Demiurge between God

and the world made it highly important to identify God and the world-maker. The early creeds were chiefly protests against threatening errors,[1] and were not meant to be exhaustive exhibits of Christian belief.

A discussion of the attributes involves the previous determination of one or two preliminary points. In the first place, we need to know what they are, or, what is the same thing, whence and how we get knowledge of them. The older dogmatic systems of the Reformed theologians bring forward as many as eighteen; as Unity, Simplicity, Immutability, Infinity, Immensity, Omnipresence, Eternity, Life, Omniscience, Wisdom, Holiness, Justice, Truthfulness, Power, Love, Goodness, Blessedness, Will.[2] But it is evident that these are merely thrown together, pell-mell, without reference to any principle of derivation or classification. No reason appears why more should not be added, *e. g.* All-sufficiency, Wrath, Mercy, Long-suffering. The root of the difficulty is, that they were derived from the utterances of Scripture, which were made occasionally and incidentally, without a thought of scientific precision or completeness. After collecting them all, we could not know that they represented all the attributes, or

[1] Cf. Allen, *Continuity of Christian Thought*, p. 111 ff.

[2] See Rothe, *Dogmatik*, i. 102 n.

how they are related to the essence of the Deity; for as the Scriptures undertake no demonstration of the existence of God, so neither do they attempt to give an idea of his being or essence, as he is in himself, apart from his manifestations of himself in nature and history. Hence we must endeavor to determine the principle by which we can know what attributes belong to God.

But, first of all, we need a definite conception of what we mean when we speak of attributes. Etymologically, the word is plain enough. An attribute is something attributed or ascribed to God. But the thing itself is not thereby defined. Speaking loosely, we ascribe existence to God as well as omnipotence; but is existence an attribute? Certainly not. Existence is inseparable from being. No existence, no being; and being can be no attribute, because there is nothing but itself to which it can be ascribed. We must evidently distinguish in thought between the being, essence, or substance of God and the attributes which belong to him. An attribute is not a constitutive element of the divine being, but an activity or characteristic of it. It corresponds to what in man we call a faculty or quality. Thus thought is a faculty, but not a constituent element, of the mind. The faculty of thought, *i. e.* the power to think, cannot be a prime element, but must inhere in something;

and that in which it inheres is the mind. Thought is, therefore, an attribute of mind, and manifests itself in action. But there may also be attributes of mind which are not faculties or powers, but constitute qualities by which the action of other mind-attributes is affected. You remember the old maxim, *Errare humanum est*, — liability to error is characteristic of man. This liability to error is not an active power; it is in itself a quiescent and yet very fruitful quality, which but too often vitiates our thinking. An attribute, then, is either an active faculty or modifying quality of the mind or being in which it inheres.

Now comes the main question: How are we to determine what are truly divine attributes? How may we know that we have them all, and that we include nothing among them that does not belong there? Manifestly, we must derive them from our idea of God, — from the most perfect conception of him that we can attain. Of course, this involves liability to error. Our idea of God may be incorrect and insufficient, and our reasoning from it may go astray; but, *mutatis mutandis*, this is true of all our thinking and reasoning, whatsoever the subject of their attention. Let us still proceed by way of analogy. We have an idea of man, and can distinguish the several logical elements of which it is made up. Man is a finite,

imperfect being, consisting of material body and immaterial spirit. As spirit, *i. e.* in his real self, he is mind, affections, will, conscience. He is a dependent being who did not make himself. He therefore had a beginning, and as to his material part *must* have an end, and as to his spiritual being *may* have an end, should it so please his Maker. Such is our conception of man, so far at least as we now need to complete it; and from it, granted that we had the ideas contained in the terms employed, such as mind, will, etc., we could deduce the attributes or faculties and characteristics of man, even though, were the thing possible, we had never seen a single specimen of the race, and belonged ourselves to another order of intelligent beings. Passing by his physical nature, we should say, He is mind; therefore the attributes of thought, knowledge, and communication belong to him. He has affections, *i. e.* he is receptive of, and responsive to, influences of other beings or things; therefore he has the attributes of love and hatred, joy and sorrow, delight and disgust. He is will; therefore he has power. He has a conscience; therefore he knows both good and evil. He is finite, conditioned by time and space, and morally imperfect; therefore he is limited and imperfect in all he thinks and feels and does.

Now apply this method to our idea of God. We

have found God to be the infinite, eternal, righteous, every way perfect Being, — the absolute, unbounded life, and the source of all existence. It may be objected that we have reached this idea only by reasoning upward from the manifestation of his attributes in the world and in our own minds; and that is true. Speculatively, we get our knowledge of God from his attributes; and conversely, we deduce his attributes from the conception we have formed of him. The reasoning is circular, but not so as to invalidate itself. It is quite possible from a few, say five, data to establish a general conclusion, from which then many more, let us say twenty, partial conclusions may be deduced. And if among these twenty the five original data are included, they may reappear in modified forms, and invested with greater certainty than they had before. It is this that makes the increase of knowledge possible. But whether this be admitted or not, in now seeking to deduce the attributes of God from our idea of him, we do not reverse the previously pursued process in order to establish the truth of those already found, nor to add to their number, although both results may happen, but to guard against improper addition or omission, and to verify or correct our conception of each of them. After this explanation, let us proceed. The idea of existence at once suggests

relation to space and time — presence; but when applied to God, the infinite and eternal, this idea is at once modified into that of omnipresence. From our conception of God as personal being, it follows that he has all those distinctions which we have already found in man, — intellect, will, the moral power, and that susceptibility to be affected by other beings than himself (or by himself within himself) which constitutes the basis of the affections. Hence he has the attributes or qualities implied in them. He has thought, knowledge, power, holiness, love. Again, as the infinite, eternal, and perfect Being, he has the qualitative attributes of infinity, eternity, and perfection; and it is evident that these must modify all the active attributes that belong to him as a personal being, so that, *e. g.*, his power must be conceived as infinite, eternal, and perfect power, and his righteousness as infinite, eternal, perfect righteousness. And finally, as infinite, eternal, perfect personality, the attribute of absolute blessedness must belong to him.

Herewith we have exhausted the data given in our idea of God, from which to deduce his attributes. Some predicates, now and then brought forward as attributes, express conceptions concerning the divine essence, others are included in those we have found. When, for instance, we speak of God as the absolute life, we express our highest

conception of his essence, the substance of his being, the dwelling-place, if I may so speak, of the divine Ego. I cannot conceive of it as an attribute in any sense of the term. There is nothing to which it can belong, — it is the very God. Strictly speaking, the phrase "the living God" is as tautological as "the living life" would be. When the Scriptures or we ourselves use it, it is only to emphasize the idea already contained in the word God, — to bring out its profoundest meaning. Similar remarks apply to the term "spirituality." When we say "God is spirit," we seek to express, as best we can, our conception of the divine substance. "God is spirit" and "God is life" are coterminous phrases. Both denote the same object, the essence or substance of God, although their contraries are different. Nor can Unity and Uniqueness be properly classed as attributes; but for a different reason. These terms are at bottom nothing more than negations, or rectifications of imperfect conceptions of God. As such, they are wholly unnecessary as soon as the idea of the infinite, perfect, personal God has been found. A personal being is necessarily one, in the strictest sense, excluding not only plurality, but also compositeness, the opposite of simplicity; and an infinite being can have no compeers. Will and freedom both appear in omnipotence and every other

manifestation of divine life, and therefore need no separate statement.

The classification of the attributes is difficult. No principle has yet been discovered against which no objections can be urged. Perhaps the same might be said of any attempt at classifying the manifestations of spirit-life even on the human plane. Fortunately, perfect success is not indispensably necessary. Yet classification, by promoting clearness and order, is always an aid to thinking; so that even an imperfect system is usually better than none. The most frequently adopted division of the attributes is into absolute and relative. The relative are those of which we become cognizant when we contemplate God in relation to the universe; the absolute, those we discover when we regard him as he is in himself. The latter are also called quiescent, as resting in God; the others, transient or operative, as passing from to operate outside of himself. It would be easy to find faults in this division, but difficult to improve on it. Adopting it, the two classes are as follows: Absolute (or Quiescent) attributes, — Infinity, Eternity, Blessedness; Relative (or Operative) — Omnipresence, Omnipotence, Omniscience, Holiness, Love.

Time will not permit a full discussion of all the attributes. Holiness and Love can be properly

treated only in connection with the revelation of God in Christ, which we cannot here presuppose. Infinity, as the expression of God's absolute independence, underlies every other attribute; as the expression of his independence of space limitations, it appears in omnipresence. Both it and blessedness may be passed over. Those that remain present problems of such wide reach and profound interest that they will occupy all the time at our disposal.

A few words, in closing, about the question whether the attributes connote objective differences in the divine being, or represent nothing more than man's subjective conceptions of God.[1] From Augustine down to the middle of the present century, the almost unanimous doctrine of theologians has been that they have no real existence in God, but are merely logical distinctions made by the human mind. It was held that the divine essence and the attributes are one and the same thing, and that all the attributes are identical. What this means, it is not easy to see; but what it is supposed to mean appears from the deductions drawn from it. Thus, according to St. Augustine, Blessedness, Greatness, Wisdom, Truth, Benevo-

[1] Cf. Dr. Hodge's excellent section on this subject, *Systematic Theology*, i. 368 ff.

lence, are all the same thing. But by parity of reasoning, knowledge and will must be the same thing; whence it would follow that whatever God knows he also does, and that whatever he knows in man he also approves and loves. The denial of true distinctions between the attributes was made in the interest of the "simplicity" of the divine being, by which is meant that it is uncomposite, that there is in it no combination of elements, whether elements of material or form, of nature or essence. This is well. Simplicity is, as we have seen, implied in our conception of God as true unity. But how does the recognition of truly distinct attributes endanger this simplicity? No one conceives of the attributes as representing divisions or departments, so to speak, in the divine essence. But if one did, — and mediæval Realism came very near it, — the true way to set him right would be to show that he misconceived the nature of an attribute, and its connection with essence. An attribute is a mode in which the divine life manifests itself; and the only thing it implies about the divine essence is that it has in it the conditions presupposed by such manifestation. In other words, the attributes simply affirm that the divine essence is such that God *can* know and work and love. What composition or combination is there here to exclude? Distinctions are implied, it is true; dis-

tinctions between knowing and doing, willing and loving, action and non-action, etc. But if God is to be regarded as an absolutely distinctionless being, they are assuredly right who thence conclude that it is impossible for us to attain to any true knowledge of him. Take any object of thought, eliminate distinction after distinction, and that at which you arrive is — pure nothing. The removal of the last distinction carries with it the extinction of the object for the thinker.

The intention of the old theologians was good, but the necessarily logical outcome of their position is pernicious. If there be no distinction in God, how can he be a personal being? The very idea of self-consciousness implies a distinction between self as subject and self as object. Yet they who maintained this view were equally decided in their acceptance of the doctrine of the Trinity, which, if God be distinctionless being, is sheer contradiction. Modern theology has rightly abandoned the old position. And it has abundant ground for so doing in the nature of man himself, apart from all philosophical considerations. Or are we, in our spiritual nature, composite beings? Is the mind one thing by itself, the will another, and the conscience a third? Is not our consciousness a consciousness of unity undivided and indivisible? And yet we know that thought and

knowledge and action are not the same thing in us. They are movements of the same ego, but different in their character. That the one ego exercises all these different functions we know by the surest of all tests, — that of consciousness. What the ground for them in the essence of the mind may be, it will be time enough to investigate when we succeed in putting some captured specimen ego under a microscope. If the reality of different faculties in us does not make us composite beings, why should it do so in God?

It is possible that this reasoning may be objected to as anthropomorphism. Well, then, anthropomorphism let it be. But it is the anthropomorphism of the doctrine that man was made in the image of God, which is verified by all our knowledge of the universe. What is all human science, so far as it is science, but the result of a successful rethinking of God's thought as incorporated in nature? The finite mind that, however laboriously, spells out the record written in the universe must, to the extent of its powers, be conformed in structure and modes of action to the Infinite Mind that wrote it.

The God that logically results from the denial of objective differences between the attributes is, as Dorner says, a God who, while he has shown himself to us as power, knowledge, love, has shown

not himself, but an illusive phantasm. In fact, the God that results is not only an unknown God, but a dead God, — a God who, if I may say it without irreverence, is drowned in the ocean of his own life and perfections. Or if, to escape a conclusion so utterly unthinkable, we describe God as *actus purus*, sheer activity, pure movement, still we get nothing but the God of pantheism, a blind, unconscious force.

LECTURE V.

THE OMNIPRESENCE, ETERNITY, AND OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD.

We saw last week that we derive the attributes of God by analysis of our idea of God. A discussion of them, therefore, cannot add to the sum of our knowledge concerning God. It can only state explicitly what we already possess implicitly, and bring its several parts into relation to each other and to thought generally. It is the latter of these possible services that give it its main importance, and that will shape the course of our inquiries.

We begin with Omnipresence. Some theologians use instead the term Immensity, *i. e.* immeasurableness; while others again, making a distinction between omnipresence and immensity, apply the latter to the essence of God in itself, the former to the being of God in his relations to the universe. In either case, the word "immensity" may very well be dispensed with. It adds no element which we shall not reach without it; and its very sound is, to my ear at least, suggestive of gross, material conceptions of God.

The idea of omnipresence is by no means free from difficulty. What are we to understand by it? Does it mean that God's essence fills all space? That is, in brief, its explanation by most theologians, including those of modern days. But that definition leads into most inextricable entanglements of thought. If the divine essence fills all space, where then is there room for the finite, physical universe? It could only be found within the essence of God. We should have to conceive of the essence or substance of God as a literally shoreless ocean, bearing on its bosom, here, there, and yonder, millions of islands, great and small, each a world with all that therein is, sin and misery not excluded. It is certainly not in this sense that in Him we live and move and have our being. But even so, the essence of God would not fill all space. There would be spaces or gaps within it, wherever one of the island worlds was found. And that, too, even though we conceived the divine essence to penetrate all matter, as the atmospheric air penetrates it; for though the densest substance has air in it, it is not all air. Though not one atom of matter be in actual contact with any other atom, but leaves open channels for the air to enter and pass through, the atoms themselves must by their very definition be conceived as impervious. The only possible way I can conceive of God as filling all

space is that of the idealistic philosophy, carried to the extreme of denying that there is any finite existence at all, — that what we call such is but the unreal creation of our own minds. But, says Dr. Hodge, though "God fills all space, is not absent from any portion of it, nor more present in one portion than another, this of course is not to be understood of extension or diffusion. Extension is a property of matter, and cannot be predicated of God. . . . Nor is this omnipresence to be understood as a mere presence in knowledge and power. It is an omnipresence of the divine essence." [1] But is not this replacing with one hand what the other has taken away? Of course, the divine essence is not material; but how can it fill all space unless it has extension or diffusion in some sense of the word? Surely space is not filled by nothing; nor can nothing be said to be in space. God is spirit; but even spirit must be conceived as having some relation to space. It is here or there; and even the Scholastics, when they debated how many angels could dance on the point of a needle, did not think that two of them could occupy the same infinitesimal portion of space, not to speak of occupying the spaces already filled by the solid material atoms of the needle.

But, admitting that the divine essence is of such

[1] *Syst. Theol.*, i. 383.

a nature as to be able to be in space also occupied by matter, the omnipresence of God in that way is still not merely inconceivable, but seems impossible. For whether we conceive the consciousness of God to be centralized somewhere within his essence, or to be diffused throughout the whole of it, in either case only that part of him would be present in this world which filled this part of universal space; in other worlds other parts would be present, but the whole of God would not be present anywhere or with anything. Dr. Hodge would meet this by a passage which he quotes approvingly from Augustine, in which that great teacher says that "the whole of God is in heaven alone, the whole on the earth alone, the whole both in heaven and on earth; he is comprehended by no place, but the whole of him is in himself and everywhere." Stripped of its form, that is doubtless good doctrine; but it is with its form that I am concerned just now. How am I to harmonize its parts with each other, and the whole with the formula that God's essence fills all space? The whole God assuredly includes the whole essence; but how can the whole essence be in heaven, the whole on earth, the whole everywhere, at one and the same time?

Once more: we conceive of space as unlimited, — cannot conceive of it otherwise. If the essence

of God fills all space, his essence must be unlimited; but in that case, how can he be personal? Personality is inconsistent with unlimited — *i. e.* boundary-less — extension in space. To be sure, theologians say that extension is not predicable of the essence of God; but the affirmation that he fills space is utterly unthinkable, unless, despite of every disclaimer, the idea of extension, with which we naturally start out, is furtively retained by the mind. And therefore, if God is conceived to fill space, he cannot also be conceived as a personal being. For personality, as I have said, implies definition. Whoever understands God's infinity to involve his limitless diffusion through space must admit that he cannot conceive him to be personal.

I have dwelt on these contradictions in order to prepare the way for inquiring into their source. Assuredly, God is omnipresent. That is the doctrine, not of the Scriptures alone, but also of the reason. It is the necessary sequence of his universal causality. The fact stands firm, but the ordinary explanation of it obscures its truth. The explanation contains two elements of confusion. In the first place, it connects the idea of omnipresence with the idea of space; and in the second place, it asserts that the divine essence fills universal space. The assertion seems to derive a good part of its

popular strength, at least, from a misconception of the term "infinite" as applied to God. God, we are prone to reason, is an infinite being; therefore his essence or substance, which is spirit, must be infinite. But the word "infinite" is used in two very different senses. Etymologically, it signifies boundless, limitless. Thus, the edges of this table are its bounds or limits. If they were absent, if the table had absolutely no edges or limits, it would be infinite in length and in breadth. If its surfaces, upper and lower, were likewise absent, it would furthermore be infinite in thickness, and fill infinite space in all directions. But the word has another sense, not only in philosophy, but also in ordinary speech. A limit often means a weakness, a barrier, restraint, an obstacle or adverse condition, without the slightest regard to space or spatial relations. Thus, we confess that our minds are limited, meaning that we soon exhaust our powers of thought, without thinking for an instant of size or extension as connected with mind. We say of a person, His mind is powerful, but it has its limitations; meaning thereby that on some subjects the strength of his intellect is countervailed or overborne by prejudice, want of information, or whatever else may hinder it from working up to its normal power. The idea of space never occurs to us. Now, unfortunately, when we apply

the word "infinite" to the essence of God, we almost involuntarily take it in the first, the spatial sense. We know so little of immaterial spirit that it is difficult to abstract the notion of extension, suggested by the term "infinite," from the divine essence, and this natural difficulty is greatly enhanced when we describe the divine essence as omnipresent, a word strongly suggestive of extension and solidity. The consequence is, that we interpret the infinity in a material sense, and conclude that omnipresence means that God's essence fills all space, thereby involving our further thought in endless confusions and contradictions. "Infinite," in connection with God, must be taken in the other, non-spatial sense. It properly means that he is absolutely unconditioned, uncontrolled, — independent of every possible let or hindrance, barrier or restraint, that could be interposed from without, or spring from imperfections within himself. It has nothing whatever to do with space, except to say that he is wholly independent of it. It makes no affirmation concerning the spatial relations of the essence of God, except that it is not subject to them.

It may occur to you that the substitution of one definition of the word "infinite" for another does not alter the actual relations of God to space. Admitted, it may be said, that the word properly char-

acterizes God as the unconditioned, who, as such, is above space, one result may be that you avoid the contradictions previously spoken of, but another will be that you leave the relation of omnipresence to space wholly undetermined. That is true; and therefore we must now ask, What is space? Some philosophers, with Kant at their head, maintain that both space and time are nothing more than subjective conceptions of the mind, forms or relations imposed on objects by the thinking subject, but without objective existence or truth. This doctrine is a mixture of truth and error. Its truth consists in its correction of the naive belief, in which prior to philosophical inquiry we all share, that time and space exist in themselves, apart from material objects or spiritual beings. The ordinary mind, and not without the countenance of some philosophers, holds that, were all sensible existence and all thinking mind to be annihilated, space and time would still remain. It endows them with independent and real, albeit intangible, existence. But this is an error. Space and time, as we know them, have no existence except as relations of things. Space is the relation or form in which things outside of self coexist, side by side, at the same time; time, that in which primarily things within the self (thoughts, feelings, perceptions), and, secondarily, things without the self, exist successively, one after

another. Space and time are not realities, entities, material or immaterial. Abstract these from real existences, and they are nothing. They are universal forms of existence, as fluidity and solidity are special forms. But it does not follow that they are mere creations of the mind, and have no objective truth, — nothing answering to them in real things. The circle and the triangle are also conceptions of mere relations or forms between sides and angles, circumference and centre; and yet it is by reasoning from these relations that we can predict cosmic events, eclipses, transits, conjunctions and oppositions, which are verified to the fraction of a minute. What does that prove? Manifestly, that our ideas of time and space, although without objective reality, are nevertheless objectively true. It proves that the forms under which the mind apprehends things correspond to the forms under which they exist in relation to each other.

At this point we might be tempted to escape from our difficulty by declaring that neither space nor time has anything to do with God. But, without proper qualification, that would only lead to others equally pressing. No doubt it is true that space and time, as we empirically know them, being forms of finite things, exist only in and through finite things. Before the creation of the universe they were not; for there was nothing of which they

could be the forms, or between which the relations they denote could subsist. Like all the sensible creation, they then existed only in the thought and purpose of God. They sprang into being, at the creative fiat, with the things of which they are the forms. That follows, not only from the definition of them we have found, but from the impossibility of conceiving them as previously existing conditions of the Unconditioned. Nor is this conception of space and time as created, at variance with the fact that we cannot conceive them otherwise than as infinite and therefore eternal.[1] For if we regard creation, not necessarily our solar system, but any part of the vast whole of which we know so little, as eternal, — for which much may be said, — all appearance of discrepancy vanishes. In that case we conceive as eternal, forms which have in fact eternally existed. If, on the other hand, creation had a beginning, we may interpret the notion of eternity, which is inseparable from our ideas of space and time, as expressing the universality and necessity of space and time as forms of all possible created existence. In other words, the ideas of time and space, if we abstract from them the notion of eternity, give us the forms in which things actu-

[1] The infinity of space is primarily infinity of extension; but in seeking to follow extension in any direction, the mind insensibly converts it into duration.

ally are. But the notion of eternity that clings to them adds the further determination that no created thing can exist except in these forms, and that therefore there must be in the Creator himself a necessity to create what he creates in these forms. This necessity is not imposed on him from without; it is a principle of his own perfect being. As it is necessary for him, if he create, to create that which is good, so, by the same internal necessity, he must create it in the forms of space and time. Nor does this reduce or limit the possible field of creative activity open to him consistently with the maintenance of himself as the Unconditioned. The only species of creature he cannot create is one that like himself shall be independent of space and time.

We can now see that the contradictions in which we involved ourselves at the outset resulted from defective conceptions of space. We virtually viewed it as something existing independently of God. We made an application to the Infinite Being of a finite relation. Nay, more strangely still, we defined omnipresence as meaning that the whole fullness of the divine being was contained in that which has no independent reality. When we said, God's essence fills all space, we connected totally heterogeneous ideas. We made an affirmation which became thinkable only when we surreptitiously made the divine essence an extended some-

thing of which space could be a relation. No caution not to do this, though repeated a thousand times, could prevent it, or ever will prevent it. The moment it is said, God fills all space, there is given objective and separate reality to space, and extension to God, *i. e.* he is made finite, and subject to what, though a creature of his own, is assumed to exist independently of him. And this is done in supposed compliance with the conception of God as the Infinite, because his infinity itself is misapprehended. The Infinite is the Unconditioned. Hence, when we speak of God as omnipresent, we mean or should mean that he is unconditioned as to his presence; that he is absolutely independent of space, and can be and is personally nigh to all his creatures wherever they are. We make no statement as to the nature or *locale* of his essence. What we affirm is simply this: that whereas man, being subject to the space-relation that connects and yet severs all finite things, can be in contact with external objects only under the conditions of that relation, God as the Infinite is free of the relation and its conditions, and is present with all the works of his hands. The *omne*, in omnipresence, has no more reference to empty space than the same word has in omnipotence. It looks only to the whole of *creation*, and says that from no part or being in it is God absent. Of such a

being and such a presence we can form no mental image. The moment we undertake that, we begin to anthropomorphize in a manner which destroys the idea of God; but the thought is logically deduced from the only tenable and self-attesting conception of God that can be formed, and is therefore true.

There are a number of other points usually discussed in connection with this topic. Is God present in creation essentially or potentially, personally or merely operatively? Some of the earlier Socinian divines, in order to get rid of the contradictions involved in the notion of God's essence filling all space, taught that as to his essence God is in heaven, and that he is omnipresent potentially, *i. e.* in power and action. To this it is replied, and I think correctly, that direct action without personal presence is something inconceivable. *We* may influence another at a distance by means of messages, letters, or books, and we can act on distant objects through intermediate causes by which we transmit our energy; but if applied to God, this mode of acting would imply distance between him and the world, and thus reintroduce the space-relation in our conception of him. Moreover, indirect action is not personal presence with the thing acted on; yet presence is not presence unless it be personal. Now as person and essence

are inseparable, it follows that God's presence must be essential, and not merely potential. The exclusion of God's personal presence from the world is but a single remove from deism with all its benumbing consequences and barrenness. On the other hand, it may be retorted that the doctrine of the personal immanence of God in the world, and with all his creatures, opens the way to pantheistic aberrations. It may do so, but only when the idea of personality is not duly emphasized. Let there be vigorous Christian theism, and no such result can follow. If first we say with St. Paul, "The God that made the world and all things therein, the Lord of heaven and earth, is not far from each one of us," — *i. e.* assert the personality, — then we may fearlessly add, "for in him we live and move and have our being." There can be neither deism nor pantheism where these two forms of thought are closely conjoined.

If now you ask how far this lengthy discussion has advanced us to the understanding of omnipresence, I answer, we have learned how to avoid entangling ourselves in contradictions when we speak or think of this divine perfection, in that we have ascertained the error in which they originate. We have not reached a clear and positive construction in thought of the idea of omnipresence, but we *have* learned *why* we cannot reach it. We can

know *that* omnipresence must be, and *what* it must be, but not *how* it is. Thinking under the relations of the finite, we have not been able to construe to our thought the infinite as existing *out* of those relations. We have had a demonstration of "the limits of religious thought," but also a fresh illustration of the fact that the reason may demonstrate the truth of that which it cannot comprehend. And it may not be amiss to add that the subject incidentally suggests the great difference there is between limitations and contradictions. The limitations of the understanding are insurmountable, but quite compatible with partial knowledge and practically full logical certainty. Contradictions spring from a faulty use of the understanding, not from its necessary incapacity, nor from anything in the things on which it busies itself. Contradictions can never be believed, or taken on faith, as some would persuade us; but they may be removed by more accurate thinking. In no case can two contraries be legitimately derived from the same truth, no matter how different its several phases may be; for God is true, and all his thoughts are true.

The *Eternity* of God is that quality of his nature that makes him unconditioned by time, as omnipresence denotes his independence of space. He

neither began to be, nor shall he cease to be. His existence, whether we try to trace it from this moment backward or forward, is endless, and at no point under the dominion of time and its changes. Thus we see the intimate coherence of this attribute with the divine immutability. He is immutable because he is eternal. His eternity excludes all such changes as growth and decay, increase in any perfection, or decrease, all second thoughts or changes of purpose, in short anything that could infer imperfection at any point of his existence. But, as Dr. Hodge observes, the idea of immutability easily degenerates into that of immobility. He cites Quenstedt, a Lutheran theologian of the seventeenth century, as saying that the immutability of God "is the perpetual identity of the divine essence and all its perfections, and *wholly excludes every movement*, whether physical or ethical." The explanation of such an almost horrifying sentence is found in the tendency, inseparable apparently from scholastic and speculative divinity, ancient or modern, to analyze words rather than the thoughts for which they stand.

There are two points strongly insisted on by the old theologians, and by no means obsolete to-day. One is that for God eternity knows neither past nor future, but is an everlasting now. It is supposed to be a necessary deduction from God's eter-

nal unchangeableness. In eternity, the scholastics were wont to say, there is but one single instant, always present, always persisting. And why? Because what has been is vanished; the future has no existence except in thought; the now alone is; consequently, unless eternity is compressed into one present now, God is not in possession of either past or future, and is therefore imperfect. There is force in this reasoning, as you will see if you recall to mind a peculiar species of experience with which we are all more or less familiar. I refer to the feeling of regret that arises in the mind when memory reproduces some pleasant scene or event of the past. We think, Would that that happy experience were permanent, — that it could at will be gone through again under all the same conditions! that I could again enjoy the same scene, enjoy the same companionship, be part of the same satisfying activities, in precisely the same physical and spiritual setting! We heave a sigh at the irrevocable past. That is, we feel that our inability to make the whole of life, so far as it is attractive, a present possession and experience, is a very great imperfection, — that the limitations of time press heavily upon us. In this state of mind we are quite ready to believe that for God there must be but an eternal now.

But let us ask what an eternal now implies.

What is *now?* The infinitesimal part of time occupied by a single thought or emotion. The instant that thought is succeeded by another, another now has come, and the former has joined the past. In other words, now is fleeting in proportion to the number and rapidity of thoughts, feelings, perceptions, that succeed each other and produce changes in my consciousness. If I am in a stupid, sluggish condition, my thoughts are few, and my nows are long. If I had but one impression made on my consciousness in the course of an hour, I should have a now of an hour's duration. If I had all the thoughts and feelings of my whole life crowded upon my consciousness in one hour, that hour would have in it more nows than I could count in a decade of years. "Now" is measured by but one single thought or mental impression. The application of this, if it be lawful to reason analogically to God, is plain. If for God there is but one eternal now, then he has but one eternal thought, — but one never-ending, unchanging consciousness, if consciousness it can be called. We have saved his absolute immutability, but we have lost the ever-springing fountain of life, thought, and action which make him the Infinite Spirit and the Infinite Good. We cannot conceive the perfect mind to be destitute of movement and succession, which in the finite mind are the *sine qua non* of conscious exist-

ence and conscious identity with the self of other nows. If there be no succession of thoughts in the Infinite, how can he be conceived to pass from creating to preserving and sustaining?

But how conceive of changes of self-consciousness in God without making him subject to time? For changing thoughts are characteristic of the time-form. I know that this moment differs from that which preceded it, because my thought has changed. The question brings us back to the nature of time and space. It can only be answered by reference to what we have already found. True, it might seem as if it could be met by saying that in God all thoughts and activities are simultaneous, — that is, God's now contains, not one single thought, but all the infinite number of his thoughts. And God's thoughts are not fused in one solid mass, so to speak, but stand forth, each in its own integrity. The relation between our thoughts is one of time; between God's thoughts it can only be conceived of as one of space, for all are simultaneous. In this way we should save the idea of an eternal now from the reproach of poverty as to contents, but not from the charge of presenting us with a lifeless God. For the explanation excludes movement, which furnishes the prime element in our conception of life. God's mind is full of thoughts, but the thoughts are stationary. We

might compare the condition of the divine mind, suggested by this view, to an ocean whose surface is broken into billowy peaks and intervening valleys, and whose profoundest depths are stirred, but which has been suddenly congealed by frost into immobility, perpetually fixed and made quiescent, in the form and semblance of the highest activity. The billows are there, and the hidden currents of the depths are there, but all as in a marine painting, still and motionless.

From so dismal a conception we are delivered by a truer idea of time. We have already found that time, like space, considered as the form of finite existence, is the product of creative power. But as such it must have some substratum in God. There must be in God that out of which it can spring. In a word, we may boldly say, with Pfleiderer, that for God also, as he is in himself and apart from his relations to the world, time exists. But observe, time, not as we empirically know it, a conditioning and hampering element of finite existence, but time in its archetypal form, of which the finite relation which we know is an adaptation to finite existence. In God it is a relation of himself to himself.

Supposing, then, that God has in himself a divine time-relation to himself, and that there is succession in his thoughts and states of self-consciousness,

does it follow that he suffers from that sense of the irrevocableness of the past, and the distance of the future, which we experience? And if that cannot be, because it would constitute an imperfection, how are we to conceive him to have both past and future in present possession? Conceive it, so as to comprehend it, we cannot. But we have in memory the means of a proximate comprehension. We cannot in actual physical deed relive the past, but through memory we can do it mentally and morally. We can reproduce the long past thrill of happiness or the burning blush of shame, not merely as memories, but as present experiences. We can feel again the exultation of success, or the pain of failure, that were experienced years since. There is no doubt great difference between memories in this respect, and also in the vividness and ready responsiveness of our imaginations and emotions; but we all have this power of making the past present in some degree. There is reason to believe that memory may be equal to the reproduction of a long life in full detail in a moment, so that the soul lives the whole over again in an instant. Who shall say that hereafter that power, which now manifests itself only, so far as I know, in persons on the verge of dissolution, may not come into constant exercise?—that we, too, shall not be freed from the limitations that now make the past a lost possession? In some analo-

gous way, we may conceive God to have not only the past, but through his unlimited knowledge the future also, forever in present possession. And not merely as a memory, but as action. Even we *live* the past in all that pertains to the immaterial self. The physical acts and enjoyments are mere memories. But in God the physical does not exist. All is spiritual, and therefore capable of endless persistence.

The other point to which I alluded, as insisted on by the old theology, is the correlate of that now considered. That dealt with the idea of time in relation to God as he exists in himself; this deals with it in connection with his relations to the finite universe. That said, God stands outside of time; this says, and by consequence he sees even things in time without reference to time and its succession, as present. This consequence, however, does not follow. God might be without even the analogue of what we know as time in himself, and yet, as he treats the world under the space-relation in which he placed it, so he might treat the world under the conditions of time which he himself imposed. Although God be timeless, he cannot but know whatever there is in time to be known, seeing he himself is time's creator. Therefore he is able to see the world in time; and it cannot be that he sees or treats it otherwise. If he thought

of the world to-day not only as it is, but also as being what it was in the paleozoic time, and as it shall be one thousand years hence, he would not think the truth of it. He would think of conditions that do not exist, as existing. His thinking would not be true. When as yet the universe had no existence, he could not think of it as already created. He could only think of it as existing in his own purposes. He cannot look upon the innocent infant of to-day as forty years hence he must look upon the crime-stained man; nor can he regard the home-returned prodigal as he regarded him when in the far-off land he wasted his substance in riotous living. God is indeed omnipresent and omniscient; sees all things and knows all things at once; but he is also the eternal Truth, who must see and know things as they are, not the past as now present, nor the future as already in real existence, but everything in those time-relations which he imposed upon them. The divine immutability — this is the positive outcome of our investigation — must be defined so as not to conflict with the divine life and truth. What it affirms is, that God in his being and character is unchangeable, — the same to-day, yesterday, and forever. It attributes to God absolute identity in all his perfections, — unchanging life, unchanging purposes, unchanging goodness.

Let us now direct our attention briefly to the Omnipotence of God. As the Infinite Life, God is necessarily conceived to be omnipotent. By this we mean that his power is unlimited, unobstructed either through its own insufficiency, or through any form of existence outside of him, or any abstract necessity over him. Whatever necessity there is for him is grounded in his nature, as the necessary being; whatever limitations there are for him are self-imposed. They are so far from being imperfections that they are the expression of his perfections. The subject is closely connected with the freedom, the unrestrained self-determination, of the divine will, which, however, I must simply take for granted. Any consideration of it would carry us much too far for our time.

The commonest mode of translating the word "omnipotence" is to say that God can do whatever he wills to do. And this is very right; only we need to be on our guard against separating the power of God from his other perfections, — against setting it up on a throne of its own, as it were, and making a new God of it. It is doing this that has so often led to absurd questions and disputes as to whether God can do this or that. Can God do evil? Can he leave two points where they are, and yet shorten the straight line that connects them? Can he make a man who shall be able to

live and work in two places at once? Can he make that undone which has been done? Questions like these sometimes perplex the well-meaning but untrained mind, and they frequently constitute a large part of the popular infidel's stock in trade. But even in the Schools similar questions were once debated, — *e. g.* there was once quite a prolonged, learned, and serious discussion of the question, Whether God can do the impossible? Is not the impossible included in the *omne?* God can do whatever he wills, why not this? The answer is, The question is absurd. No one even can will to do what on the face of it is nothing but a logical contradiction. Suppose the impossible done, would not that show that the impossible was still not done? Certainly that which was done was not impossible, for it has been done. Such questions are mere verbal quibbles, in which no real thought is expressed. It is different with such a question as whether God can do evil. The answer must be, No. Not, however, because he has not the power, but because he has not the will. The impossibility is not physical but moral. It is only generalizing this answer to say that God cannot will to do anything at variance with his absolute perfection. He cannot will that which his reason, his wisdom, or his goodness do not approve, and therefore he cannot do it. His will is not ar-

bitrary, as ours too often is, bent on an object without regard to anything but the gratification of a desire or a whim. His whole nature is perfectly at one with itself, not, as ours, divided against itself, — conscience and the understanding on one side, the passions on the other, and the stronger force determining the will. Every divine volition is the expression of the whole harmonious divine nature. It is not a question of power, but of truth, — truth to himself, to his work, to the laws he has impressed on nature.

But this suggests the question, whether God himself is not the author and creator of truth, and, if he be, what there is to prevent him from making that true and good which now is false and bad. His power as absolute power, it is thought, must involve this. God, said Descartes, did not will the three angles of a triangle to be equal to two right angles because he knew that it could not be otherwise, but it cannot be otherwise and is true because he so willed it. Theologians have in the same way made God the creator of moral law. God, they said with Abelard, does not will or do anything because it is right, but it is right because he wills or does it. Worse still, so devout a man as Stier takes the ground that right depends on the will of God, and that therefore those actions recorded in the Old Testament which, judged by or-

dinary standards, are immoral, were right. In this way God's omnipotence was made, not the creator only, but the *arbitrary* creator, of whatever is right and true. If that view were right, the absurd questions of which I spoke a moment since would be legitimate.

A distorted truth underlies these speculations of Descartes and Stier and others. And they are not answered by those who maintain that all truth, physical, mathematical, moral, exists apart from God. Where or in what could it exist? Truth is not an entity that can be conceived to have a being of its own. To say that it exists in the nature of things solves nothing. It does exist in the nature of things; but where did the things come from, and who gave them their nature, or marshaled them in relationship to each other? Truth can have no other source than God. That is the truth in the speculations adverted to. From God comes all that is, and, sin excepted, as it is. But truth is not an arbitrary creation of the Almighty's fiat. It is not a scheme thought out by God, and then impressed on finite things. Truth, *all* truth, is the reflection of the divine nature, equally eternal and unchangeable as that nature. God could not make the triangle other than it is, because it conforms to the necessary thinking of his own mind in the region of abstract mathematics. He could

not have made that right which now is wrong, because it would have made his own work abhorrent to his moral nature. He did not, and to finite creatures in a finite world could not, impart all truth; but what he did impart is true forever. And it is this necessity of his nature, to be true to himself, that constitutes the only limit to the freedom of his will. His self-determination is none the less complete that it cannot determine anything against itself.

LECTURE VI.

THE OMNISCIENCE, HOLINESS, AND LOVE OF GOD.

THE attribute of Omniscience, the last of those that present serious difficulties, is perhaps the most difficult of all.

Omniscience is God's perfect knowledge of all that is or can be, however related to time and space. It is, as we shall see, closely related to his perfect wisdom. Both are embraced in the divine intelligence: knowledge is the apprehension of things as they are in themselves and in their mutual relations; wisdom is the faculty which adapts means to ends.

God's omniscience is a necessary deduction from his perfect self-knowledge, on the one hand, and, on the other, from the fact that all that is or can be has its source in him, and is thus an object of his self-knowledge. God knows himself perfectly, because his personality is perfect. In the knowledge of himself, *i. e.* of his nature, he knows all necessary, eternal truth, as distinguished from whatever is the offspring of his creative will. The origin of necessary truth has already been glanced at

in connection with omnipotence. Mathematical and moral truth, and whatever truth lies at the foundations of all physical relations, such as those of mechanics and chemistry, do not, and never did, exist independently of God; but neither were they created by the will of God. They exist in the nature of God, as principles, relations, modes of action, which God himself can no more change than he can change his nature. They are eternal and necessary, because they are determinative elements in the nature of the eternal and necessary being. All these truths God knows through his self-consciousness, which is not like ours partial and often dim, but absolutely perfect, embracing his whole self with all it contains. Now knowledge, properly so called, is not merely knowledge of separate, unrelated facts, such as a person would have of geology if he could recognize and name every specimen of rock in a cabinet, but know nothing of their composition or the processes of rock-formation. If one knew all the facts in the world, but knew them only in that way, his mind would be no more than a scrap-bag of knowledge. God's knowledge is science, in the perfect sense in which we can never apply that word to any knowledge of ours. He knows every particular thing in its relation to the principle from which it springs, and he knows the principle with all that is contained in it. His

knowledge is an organic whole in which unity is seen simultaneously with all the possible multiplicity of divisions and combinations in which it manifests itself. Hence God knows not only what actually is in himself, but all that could possibly be produced by himself. For everything he produces must, in proportion to its likeness to himself, have more or less of his own characteristics in it. Of all the creatures we know, man has most of these, both in number and in variety and intricacy of combination; and what we call inorganic matter has least. No created thing, however, can be entirely destitute of them, or indeed be anything else than a compound of them, so to speak; for even God cannot impart that which he has not in himself. Matter, therefore, if it be created, must have derived its constituent elements from God himself. What those elements are, we do not know; but we do know that the properties of matter conform to mathematical, chemical, or other forms of eternal truth. Therefore, since everything God could make must be the outcome of what there is in himself, and since he knows all there is in himself and all its possible creative results, it follows that he knows not only that which is, has been, or shall be, but all that possibly could be, even that which he will never will to be. This knowledge theologians designate as God's necessary knowledge, because it

is independent of creation. He had it when as yet he had created nothing. Before the foundations of the world were laid, he knew all the infinite possibilities contained in himself, and all their consequences. It was then a knowledge of what we may call world-ideas or world-plans, not one of which had objective existence. When out of the infinite number of possible worlds or universes one was created, and brought into actual existence, then the knowledge of that one became objective. God did not cease to know its idea or plan as idea, for his knowledge cannot perish; but he thenceforth also knew it as realized and objectively existing. The notion that God, as eternal and immutable, does not know things as past, present, or future, has already been considered, and needs not to be gone over again. God may be said to have a double knowledge of the universe: First, as eternally existing in his mind as an idea, and secondly, as existing in time and space. But not to enlarge on this, let me enunciate the conclusion to which the preceding reasoning leads. It is this: If God through his self-consciousness necessarily knows all the infinite possibilities included in his creative might, and knows them in full detail, from their first beginnings to their last results, then he knows all he actually did create with equal comprehensiveness. Not a lily blooms, not a sparrow hungers,

not a hair falls from human head, but he knows it. The whole course of history, and all its results, lay open before him previously to creation, and lie open before him now.

But here we encounter what is one of the hardest problems in theology. It is not difficult to understand how God can know, not merely as a matter of present reality, but of eternal prevision, the whole working of the physical universe as physical. He knows its constitution, and the precise working of its forces under laws inherent in them, or impressed upon them through their mutual relations. Although the mode of his knowledge, as eternal, and its infinite extent, be incomprehensible, yet of its possibility we can form a sufficiently clear idea. We ourselves reason from causes to effects, with entire confidence that results will be such as we expect. But the universe contains not only physical existences, not only organic and animal life, but free agents, personal beings, with power to determine their own course of action, and even by interference to divert the mechanical energies of the world from their natural courses, and direct them to ends of their own. How could God know what they would do, and what the result of their doing would be, both on themselves and on physical nature? We are certain indeed that he knew all the possible alternatives open to their choice; for

they, too, are his creatures, the products of his power, constructed on those same eternal, necessary principles that are inherent in his own nature. But could he also know which, of all the possibilities that would lie open to each free being, that being would select and pursue? Pursue, I said; as if persistence in a course once selected were certain, which it was not. Man's will, we know but too well, is often sheer arbitrariness, — mere unreasonable caprice. This fact augments the difficulty. It implies that there were not only unnumbered possibilities of reasonable courses, steadfastly maintained during life, but that these might have to be multiplied by equally innumerable capricious actions possible to each individual. In short, we have reached a point where it seems that we must either limit divine foreknowledge or deny the freedom of intelligent beings.

To deny the freedom of the will would plunge us into a sea of troubles, each one practically more serious than that now pressing on us. If our wills be not free, if they have not the power of willing the contrary, then for us all responsibility is at an end. Our freedom is a mere delusion. Our actions, the bad as well as the good, can only be imputed to the power that directly or indirectly controls our volitions, be it God or fate or matter. We need not deny that human freedom is in many

instances terribly weighted by inherited predispositions, or by the destructive effects of habitual evil-doing. It is not in any one of us what it would be in a being sinless himself and sprung from sinless ancestors. But all this, though it makes right-doing difficult, does not destroy the consciousness that we are free, or the conviction that right-doing is possible.

The alternate means of escaping the contradiction, that of assuming that with regard to future actions of free agents the divine omniscience is limited, is adopted not only by Aristotle, and many of the Socinian and Arminian divines, but also by Martensen, Rothe, and some other modern theologians. But can that be regarded as a satisfactory conclusion? Let us see what it does and does not imply. It does not seem necessarily to imply that creation was a species of divine experiment, the final result of which was not certainly known to God; so that we should have to conceive of him as now watching the working of the universe, as the chemist watches the result of a hitherto untried combination of elements. That God was from eternity absolutely certain of attaining the final end he proposed to himself in creation is as firmly held by the theologians to whom I have alluded as by other Christians. They believe, too, that absolute, infallible Wisdom so planned creation as to

adjust every part, relation, and force to the final end to be attained. Nor was the freedom of free intelligences, and the possibilities therein involved, overlooked in the plan. On the contrary, it is evident, even to our understanding, that the education and development of beings endowed with freedom is the central thought in the ultimate end and purpose of the whole universe. So far from being unconsidered, they and their freedom must have been the all-controlling element in the planning of divine wisdom. But does it necessarily follow from this that all their future volitions and actions were foreseen? In one sense, yes; in another, no. It does follow that God must have eternally known all the possibilities of finite free will and actions; and not only the possibilities of all free intelligence *en masse*, but of each individual in particular. He must have known the precise bounds of all those free actions, and have provided for their contingent effects on the working of nature and the realization of his ultimate purpose, by compensating, counterbalancing, and overruling agencies. This much unquestionably follows from the absolute certainty that divine plans are perfect and infallible. But it does not necessarily follow that God must have foreseen the free decisions of each and every free being. The certain realization of the divine purpose is sufficiently guaranteed by his

knowledge of the limits of the contingencies involved in free actions; and it might be argued that the glory of his infinite wisdom is more enhanced by the presence of contingencies than he could add to that of his knowledge by piercing through to their secrets.

The two ways of solving the problem, usually resorted to, seem to me to rest on an entire misapprehension of its origin. God's foreknowledge, we are told, has no causative effect on the determinations of the created will, so that, *e. g.*, his foreknowledge of Iscariot's treachery caused him to commit it. Of course not. That result would follow, to be sure, from the doctrine that in God there are no real distinctions between his being and his attributes. If that were true, his knowledge and will would be identical, and to know a thing would be to will and produce it. But that position we have already rejected as untenable. I may foresee that A B will decline the bishopric of X, to which he has been called; but does that leave him less free to accept it? And though my knowledge were absolutely certain, it would affect A B's free will no more than if it were a mere conjecture. God's foreknowledge, as such, absolutely certain though it be, is in no way incompatible with human freedom.

The other solution commonly proposed is that

in God there is, properly speaking, no *fore*knowledge. His knowledge is timeless — eternally present. He knows and sees all that has been, is, and shall be, in one ever-present now. From all eternity he sees every volition of every free agent as actually present and bringing forth its results. The difficulty of conceiving how he could foresee the contingent volitions of free beings is one of our own making. It has no ground but our inability to conceive of God's activities otherwise than under the form of time. But this endeavor touches the real difficulty no more than the other did.

That which gives rise to the difficulty is the fact that we are compelled to find the source of God's eternal knowledge in his self-consciousness. All his knowledge must be knowledge of himself. When as yet the earth was not, nor the heavens, nor any created thing or spirit whatsoever, what was there for God to know? His own infinite fullness, — himself, what he had in himself, and all that might possibly become through himself. External existence there was none. He was the All, — the Only; the Ego without an external non-Ego. As absolute Spirit, he had not even a body which he could contemplate as in some sense objective to himself. All his knowledge, being self-knowledge, came not, like ours, through eye and ear, or any analogous channels, but through self-

inspection or self-contemplation. Now, we can see with sufficient clearness that in this way he could know everything except how free wills would decide. The external universe, if free agents be left out of the account, is the incorporation in material and physical forms of his own thought and will. It is not self-determining, but moves in unfailing conformity to laws which are characteristics of his own nature. He knows exactly what every energy he has put into it can do, because it is his own energy; he knows exactly what it will do, because it is still subject to his own will. But his relation to the free agents of the universe is in one respect essentially different. They, too, are embodiments of his thought and will. The power they possess is his; they live, and move, and act, because he furnishes them with life and strength. So far they, like all other parts of the whole universe, are still contained within the divine self-consciousness. To know what they can or will do, the Maker has but to turn his thought in upon himself. But by making them free, self-determining beings, he enabled them to turn their power and activity into whatever direction open to finite beings they please. His own mental and moral characteristics are in them, just as his mental characteristics are in physical nature, but under conditions of freedom. Just here our problem emerges. God could

know all physical nature, physical man included, by self-inspection. He could know man as spirit, offspring of his own Spirit, in the same way. He could know all there is in him, and all that could possibly come from him. But how could he know what actually would come from him? How could he know what would be the volitions of the free will in any particular instance? Is not the will, by its freedom, lifted out of the range of the divine prevision? This is the problem. And you see it is not solved by saying that God's knowledge is not foreknowledge, but knowledge of all things as ever present in an eternal now. We have already found that when the Infinite deals with the finite, he must take it as finite, under the forms of time and space. If the knowledge of an act not yet performed is not foreknowledge, what is it? But, not to insist on that, to have any bearing on the question, the offered solution must mean that God eternally knew every decision of every free being, because he eternally beheld the very making of those decisions; but in that case he derived his knowledge, not from himself, but from the objective act eternally present to him. If God's knowledge is and always was knowledge not derived from the observation of any external object, but from his own self-consciousness, how could he know that which his plan necessarily left indeterminate?

I do not see how the problem can ever be solved. Let no one, however, misinterpret its consequences. It does not impair the absolute independence of God because, admitting that his foreknowledge was and is limited by the exclusion from it of the free volitions of intelligent beings, the limitation was self-imposed. It results from the exercise of creative omnipotence. Nor does it tend to shut God out from the world if foreknowledge of contingent, free actions be denied him. If we have gained nothing more by our inquiries, we have at all events obtained a firm foundation for the doctrine of the divine immanence in the universe. Deism, in removing God to heaven, or in some way locally separating him from creation, must conceive of him as deriving his knowledge of the world as it is by observation of it as something wholly outside of himself. It must endow him with something analogous to our perceptive faculties. And it cannot conceive of any divine influence on the mechanical course of the world without interference in the manner called supernatural. But in finding in the divine self-consciousness the source of all divine knowledge, because all things are and ever must be created emanations from himself, we have found a rational conception of the mode in which the creator and the creature are connected. We have found that, as Sir Isaac New-

ton expressed it, God is the *sensorium* of the universe, *i. e.* the conscious centre of the whole creation, where everything thought, felt, or done is immediately perceived. To put it in other words, God's self-consciousness is at the same time world-consciousness. He is the immanent Spirit, the truly omnipresent and omniactive in all life and existence. We have at last reached the full meaning of the words, "In him we live, and move, and have our being." And this result stands steadfast, even though we feel ourselves constrained to reject the denial of divine foreknowledge of yet unmade decisions of free agents.

So far as the problem is concerned, I think a satisfactory solution unattainable. But though I am not disposed to overrate the consequences involved in the conclusion to which it seems to lead, I cannot bring myself to accept it. To suppose the acts of free agents unknown to God before they are performed seems to carry with it the necessity of regarding all that part of the eternal plan which relates to the spiritual history of mankind, their education and redemption, as hypothetical. It precludes the possibility of God's choosing individual men for special service. How could Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, be appointed leaders and teachers of the world, when their moral self-determinations could not be foreseen? Yet the Scrip-

tures are full of such pre-appointments, and it is impossible to see how the spiritual training of the world could be carried on without them. How such foreknowledge can coexist with freedom we cannot know. That it does coexist is testified to by the universal God-consciousness of mankind. The religious consciousness finds its own experiences expressed by the psalmist when he says: —

> "O Lord, thou searchest and knowest me.
> Thou knowest my downsitting and uprising;
> Thou notest my thoughts before they are.
> My doing and my resting thou dost sift,
> And all my ways are open to thee.
> For there is not a word on my tongue
> But, lo! thou Lord knowest it wholly.
> Thou compassest me before and behind,
> And holdest thy hand over me.
> Too wonderful for me is such knowledge;
> It is high: I cannot attain unto it."

We have now finished the discussion of those attributes into which our conceptions of time and space on the one hand, and the relations of God to the physical universe on the other, enter so largely. There remain those in which his moral characteristics, and their relations to moral being, manifest themselves. A full consideration of these would be of extreme interest to me, and I doubt not to you also. They carry us out of the rarefied atmosphere of difficult metaphysics into the more genial

air of immediately practical relations. They furnish the basis of ethics, and of the doctrine of the divine self-manifestation in providence, history, and redemption. But, as this fact sufficiently shows, they cover ground much too broad to be traversed in the time at my command. I must, perforce, content myself with a bare outline, such as the few remaining moments of this hour will permit, of their relations to God, to each other, and to moral beings.

As leading attributes, I named Holiness and Love, containing in themselves many others usually separately enumerated. But these two are the fundamental notes of God as a moral being.

First, then, let us briefly consider Holiness. It belongs to God as the perfect moral being. We have seen that moral truth, while not the creation of God's will, is a determinative element of his nature. He *is* moral truth. Now, when we attribute holiness to him, we mean that God, in the absolute freedom of his will, is in perfect harmony with himself, — that there is not the shadow of a schism in his being; that all he thinks and wills and does is in perfect yet free and unconstrained conformity with the moral elements of his nature. He is righteous, just, and true, — in one word, holy.

Being holy, as just defined, it follows that he must maintain, and guard with unsleeping care, the

ultimate moral purpose he had in view in the creation of the world. What that purpose was, we have already found. It was the production of a class of finite, morally perfected beings, — the erection of a kingdom of righteous personalities, not merely created in his own image, but permanently and wholly conformed to it. It is true, we inferred this purpose only from our own world; but we are not thereby obliged to limit our conclusion to this world. If other worlds exist, and other classes of intelligent beings in them, the ultimate purpose of their creation cannot be at variance with that we found for this. There may be diversity, but there must be unity throughout the universe. The ultimate kingdom may have varieties of moral beings, but it must be one kingdom of righteousness, as its King is one and holy. But in either case, whether there be moral beings other than man or not, the whole universe must have one single final end; and that end God, the holy one, must maintain and guard.

Hence it follows, further, that whatever free agent sets himself against the moral order of the universe, — the witness of which he has in his own conscience, and the knowledge of which is constantly imparted to him, in social life, and by God's messengers, prophets, apostles, preachers, and teachers, — and thus, to the extent of his wrong-

doing, impedes and endangers the realization of the final end for which he and all things exist, must be an object of divine disapprobation and punishment. Thus we get that attribute which is commonly spoken of as punitive justice, *i. e.* the divine righteousness in relation to sin. Its counterpart is righteousness in relation to well-doing; and both together mark God as just in all his dealings with all his creatures.

One word concerning Love. Love is the queen of all God's moral attributes. It includes them all, and pervades them all. That striking dictum of St. John, which in three words expresses what all the wisdom of mankind had never found, "God is Love," is true in every sense in which it can be taken. There is no one attribute, such as infinity or eternity, from which we logically derive the conception of God as love. It can be found in no thought less comprehensive than the idea of the absolutely perfect moral being. The only definition of which in all its forms and manifestations it admits is that of self-impartation. There is in God an ever-active eagerness to go out of himself, to give of his fullness to others; and that is love.

In the sphere of man's physical life, divine love manifests itself as kindness, benevolence, paternal solicitude. Its higher revelations fall within the sphere of the spiritual life, and, since man is sin-

ful and miserable, especially in the sphere of redemption. From this it is evident that, as the world never knew that God is love until the coming of Christ, so this love, as a divine attribute, cannot be properly considered apart from Christ and his work as the highest form of the divine self-impartation. Longsuffering, mercy, grace, all that St. Paul includes in the "unsearchable riches of Christ," are contained in it.

LECTURE VII.

THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS IN RELATION TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

When in the first part of the creed, God is designated as the Father, the relation thereby intended is that which he sustains to the Son, named in the second part. This is evident from the description of the Son as the "*only*-begotten Son," by which every other species of sonship than that which belongs to Jesus Christ our Lord is excluded. Moreover, the third part of the creed, occupied with the Holy Ghost and the sphere of his activity, clearly implies that the several terms Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are used in their mutually correlated sense. The sum of Christian belief is here grouped about the three names of the baptismal formula, which must be understood as there used. Our next topic, therefore, must be the doctrine of the Trinity.

Now it would be comparatively easy for me to give an exposition of the doctrine, and the arguments usually advanced in support of it. But if I am not very much mistaken, that is not all you

need or would wish. You do not wish me to take this grandest problem that can be presented to human thought, and work it out before you according to the methods of ordinary theological text-books, without first pointing out, to the best of my ability, the postulates that lie at the base of the demonstration, if I may so call it. You do not merely want to know what the church believes, but how to vitalize that belief as a personal conviction. You wish to know how the church itself came to believe it, and that in the face of determined, prolonged, and frequently renewed opposition from within and without. A belief so triumphantly battle-strong must have had a basis of absolute certainty. What was that basis?

It cannot have been furnished by the reason, through any apriori methods of demonstrating the Trinity. It is undoubtedly true that the philosophical effort to construct the doctrine of God derives welcome aid and relief from the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. But it is one thing to perceive the rationality of a doctrine once formulated, and a very different thing to discover and establish it. Besides, it must not be forgotten that the belief of the church, so far as it is the belief of the whole church, is the belief, not of her great minds and trained intellects alone, but also of the simple, uneducated, and ignorant. And in these

true belief, personal conviction, can never rest on the mere assurance of the others that such a thing is true. He who professes faith in the Triune God *for no other reason* than that the catechism has taught him, and that his teachers once a year at least renew the assurance, that God is Triune, does not really believe it. It simply lies in him as a sort of deposit, which he may indeed faithfully preserve even at the price of his life, while yet it is never a living, active force within him. It stirs neither his thoughts nor his emotions. It is a treasure of the value of which he has no conception. It is an item of the faith he must profess in order to be saved, or, what in these days is perhaps as likely to be his feeling, in order to be a "good Churchman." But if the doctrine had had no other confessors, it and the church that teaches it would have perished long since.

The doctrine of the Trinity is essentially a divinely revealed doctrine. And now some are perhaps ready to conclude that the basis for personal conviction of which we are in search must be found in the Scriptures. To that also I must say, No. Do not charge me with disloyalty to the Book divine before I have placed my whole thought before you. I say, No. He who professes faith in the Trinity, for no other reason than that he finds it taught in Scripture, does not really believe it.

It is in him as much a dead deposit as though he derived it from the catechism or his teacher. And in proof of that position I cite the facility with which a large proportion of a nominally Trinitarian population, here in New England, abandoned the doctrine and became Unitarians at the close of the last and the beginning of the present century. As soon as a breeze of new doctrine sprang up, it blew away the Trinitarian belief, even while it left the infallibility of the Scriptures unimpugned. People merely said, We have misunderstood the Scriptures.

Besides, when I say that the doctrine of the Trinity is a revealed doctrine, I do not mean that it is revealed by the Scriptures. Revelation precedes Scripture. God did not reveal the truth by moving holy men to write it with pen and ink on paper; he first revealed it in historical facts, and then holy men were moved to write the facts from which the doctrine springs. The doctrine itself, in the form in which the church holds it, is not to be found in the Scriptures. It took four centuries to formulate it. Not even the Council of Nicæa, but that of Constantinople, held in A. D. 381, gave it the form in which we recite it. God in history made the revelation; God in Scripture, through evangelists and apostles, recorded the great facts; and God in the church, through the divinely illu-

minated intellects of the Christian fathers, interpreted the facts, placed the principles contained in them into correlation with the divine nature or being, and expressed the result in terms of intellectual conceptions. If, therefore, the basis of personal conviction is to be found in testimony, it must be sought, not only in the Scriptures of the first century, but also in the writings of the second, third, and fourth centuries. And if inspiration of testifiers can turn their testimony into immediate living certainty for him who hears it, without other aid, that quality belongs to the fathers of the church, technically so called, as well as to apostles and evangelists; for both belong to the one church of the living God, which is the "house of God," "the pillar and ground of the truth," because in it the God of truth by his Spirit dwells and works. Do not think that in this I am enunciating anything like the Roman Catholic or Cyprianic conceptions of the church; far from it. I am only expressing my belief in the immanence of God in his church. However, on this I cannot dwell just now. The conclusion at which I aim is simply this: If inspiration is to be the last basis of personal Christian conviction, we must for the doctrine of the Trinity rely on the fathers who completed it as well as on the apostles who began it; but that inspiration, the inspiration of another,

cannot in and of itself produce the certainty of a full and reasonable conviction in any human mind. If it can, how do you account for the fact that the most moving pictures of divine love, and the most terrifying exhibitions of sin and its results, may be presented to a congregation of self-confessed sinners, with all the authority of Holy Writ, and yet leave the greater part cold and unmoved?

How great the distance is between truth entertained by the mind on the guaranty of external authority, and truth held on the certainty produced by immediate personal conviction, has been felt all through the history of the church. In Clement of Alexandria it manifests itself in the division of Christians into believers and gnostics, the knowers. Augustine, strongly as he insists on unquestioning submission to the divine authority of revelation in the Scriptures and in the church, nevertheless acknowledges the unsatisfactory character of beliefs thus grounded, by saying: "Faith [*i. e.* belief on authority, a very different thing from the "faith" of the New Testament] precedes knowledge: believe in order that you may understand." Another saying of Augustine's is: "Faith seeks — the intellect finds." Evidently faith in the sense of belief on authority is, according to Augustine, defective in the certainty of knowledge, yet leads to it. But how it leads to it, what there is to bridge the

chasm between these, he fails to indicate. This omission, however, is supplied by a striking aphorism of Anselm, in his book "On the Trinity against the Blasphemies of Roscelin," although he made no practical use of it in his discussions. The aphorism is this: "If you do not believe, you cannot experience; if you do not experience, you cannot understand." Experience, then, is the basis of personal conviction! That is to say, the father of mediæval scholasticism anticipates the doctrine of modern theology that the Christian faith has its living basis in the Christian consciousness. The words differ, — consciousness and experience, — the thing is identical. That which makes us certain of the doctrine of the Trinity, and of all other doctrines peculiar to Christianity, is, in the last analysis, not rational demonstration, nor reliance on the infallibility of the Scriptures or of the church, but on that immediate consciousness which results from personal experience.

The vital importance of this conclusion, and the fact that it is still far from universal recognition in the theology of this country, make a fuller exposition of it necessary. It is not anything new. Luther and the old Protestant dogmatic theologians found a similar principle in the words of St. Paul: "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God."[1] But the

[1] Cf. Hagenbach, *Hist. of Doctrines*, ii. 245, n. 6.

later theology, and not least the American theology, departed from this principle, — probably because it feared to detract from the supremacy of Scripture, with which it has nothing to do, — and constructed its whole system of certitude in religious matters on what are essentially deistical lines. We believe, it said, because God has spoken in the Bible; and we believe that God has spoken in the Bible, because we can prove it by long and intricate courses of reasoning. But what under this plan becomes of the untutored multitude, upon whom all this reasoning, be it never so convincing to him who can follow it, is lost? Can they never attain to the rest and peace of certainty? Must they forever be a sort of plebeian caste in the commonwealth of religion? If the Scriptures had not a tenfold stronger support in the consciousness of the Christian people than they have in the books of theologians on the "Evidences of Christianity," their practical power would be small indeed.

But let us proceed to study this Christian consciousness more directly. How does it arise? What brings it into action? If it be consciousness, what is it conscious of? With regard to the term "consciousness," it is not in all respects perfectly adequate to the use made of it. We ordinarily employ it to denote knowledge of our own mental acts, conditions, and feelings, — self-con-

sciousness, *i. e.* consciousness of what is or occurs in the self. But this does not cover all we mean by it in the phrase "Christian consciousness." There we use the term also in its widest etymological sense of knowledge shared with another or others. Being thus warned of the elasticity of the word, we shall find no serious difficulty in the use of it. The Christian, or rather the religious consciousness, — for what I am now to speak of is characteristic of man as a religious being, — is, first of all, communion, consisting in mutual knowing, — *con*sciousness, — between the human personality and the divine. God manifests (reveals) himself, and man apprehends the revelation, *i. e.* apprehends God as *being*, and as being such as he manifests himself, *e. g.* the omnipotent, the omnipresent, the omniscient, the moral. Man becomes cognizant on the one hand of God as knowing, and knowing him, — man; and on the other, of himself as knowing God so far forth as he manifests himself. In this earliest form, the religious consciousness belongs to what is usually called the stage of natural religion. It marks man as a God-conscious being. It gives rise to various perceptions and feelings, — predominantly to the perception of God's infinite greatness and to the sense of fear. For, knowing himself a sinner against eternal moral truth, and God as spotless purity and guardian of moral right, he is con-

scious of ill-desert, and knows that God must judge him as he judges himself. Hence the feeling not merely of awful reverence, — such as even innocence must experience in the presence of so great a God, and which is essentially elevating and quickening, — but of prostrating fear and apprehension, the vain impulse to flee from the omnipresent and to hide from the omniscient. This is by no means the only content of the sinful, natural, religious consciousness, but its most marked feature in practical experience. And it is manifest that it must interpose a barrier to free intercommunion between God and man. Man has lost the absolutely fearless, glad, self-yielding trustfulness, the wholly blissful sense of dependence on God, which constitute the ideal relation between him and God. He wanders like an outcast from his father's house and home, unhappy, full of distrust, and, what is worse than all, with his perverted selfhood asserting itself in obstinacy and rebellion. A broken human friendship may help to illustrate the situation. What breach is more irreparable and insurmountable than that which is opened by a disrupted, more than brotherly unity? "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and their contentions are like the bars of a castle." The perfection of the mutual adaptation and previous oneness becomes the strongest difficulty in the

way of reconciliation. Similar to this is the relation of sinful man to God; only, the disruption and the difficulties in the way of its removal are all of his own making, and derive their evil power from him alone.

This brief statement of the religious consciousness and its contents contains three points: —

First. That there is in man a natural capacity for communion with God. It is to this that God addresses himself in all his revelations, of whatsoever form. It includes, of course, man's ability to recognize the revelation as divine by immediate intuition, and to respond to it.

Secondly. That since man is a sinner, the divine revelation must assume a predominantly remedial, reconciling, restoring character. God must, in some way, reconcile the world unto himself. There must be a disclosure of divine qualities not disclosed in nature, — qualities of which sinless beings might have remained forever ignorant, such as compassion, mercy, unchanging, self-sacrificing love, all of them eternally present in God, yet truly knowable to finite beings only through their active exhibition. And yet, as the knowledge of them, and the reproduction of them by finite creatures in themselves, was necessary to their realizing the divine ideal of perfect finite moral beings, we have here incidentally come across what may

be regarded as the reason why God permitted sin to come into existence.

Finally. While sin brought with it the necessity for a reconciling revelation, the results of sin, the alienation of man from God, and the interposition by him of obstacles in the way of that immediate heart to heart and mind to mind communion with God, of which by nature he is capable, made it necessary that this reconciling revelation should open for itself a new way to the mind and heart of man; that God should break through time and space, present himself to man in human form, under all the limitations of the finite nature, but with all the unimpaired fullness of divine life and love, as the compassionate, the merciful, the Father, Friend, and Saviour. That must come to pass which St. Paul says did come to pass, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." In other words, revelation, considered only as remedial, must be historical. It could not be mere instruction through the medium of language. Language could convey to him little beyond what he already found given in creation and his own nature. It could never give him anything like adequate conceptions of divine compassion and love. Even the imperfect ideas entertained of these by Old Testament writers came through the partial exhibitions of them in the Old Testament history.

And most assuredly no mere instructing revelation could infuse new spiritual life and power into the shattered soul. That can only be effected by a real impartation of creative power. Hence the effect of the Christian revelation is recognized and spoken of as a new creation, and the restored soul as a "new creature." There has been, and there is constantly going on, an outflow of divine life every whit as real and literally true as that of which man's first creation was the result. The historical character of the Christian revelation is manifest from the New Testament itself. Half of the book is simply historical narrative, and the other half is so full of the facts related in the first that it would be meaningless without them.

The question now is, How is the religious consciousness affected by the historical self-revelation of God of which Christ is the centre? How does it reach the individual, — how does it touch, not merely his outward senses, but his inner self? How does it transform him, — make a new creature of him?

The first step evidently is that he be informed of the facts of the revelation, so far as they took place once for all. This suggests a closer definition of what constitutes an historical revelation. It is a revelation the essential element in which is that God manifests himself in acts; that he does not

merely communicate thoughts to man, but works among men, on men, and in men. Part of these acts, the historical in the narrower, more usual sense of the term, took place once for all, such as the birth of the Incarnate Logos, the works of beneficence he wrought, the discourses he delivered, his passion, death, resurrection, ascension, — all that belongs to the Saviour's earthly work and life. These may be classed as externally historical and general. The other part, the internally historical and individual part as it may be called, is of perpetual recurrence. It consists of acts wrought by the Divine Spirit directly on the human spirit. What they are will come out in the sequel. Returning now to the question proposed, I say that the first step in bringing the revealing God and the religious consciousness of the sinner into contact is to inform the latter of the facts of the externally historical revelation. Here the Scriptures find their proper place. They not only contain a record of the facts, but they interpret them, and place them in their relations to each other and to God's eternal purpose. And yet, with all their divine excellences, they cannot tell their story to the best advantage and with the most effective power, without the living voice and heart of one who himself has experienced the power of the divine acts, — in whom Christ's words and works again take

on flesh and blood. St. Paul tells how the facts must be presented when, writing to the Galatians, he says that Christ had been depicted before their very eyes as the Crucified. Thus vividly let the whole history of God's acts in Christ, and of the words of him who spoke as never man spake, be reproduced, not as to external form only, but as to their innermost life and spirit, and what will be the effect on the hearer? That will depend on his spiritual condition. If he has not yet felt the misery of his estate, if he is still busy wasting his Father's goods in riotous living, has not yet been reduced to the swine's food, is not yet aware of the utter spiritual bankruptcy that is upon him, he will be left as he was found. The preparatory dispensation of law, captivity, and suffering, for him is not yet ended. The fullness of time, in which the Incarnate Word can appear, is for him not yet come. But on the poor in spirit, on him who is aware of all his inward emptiness, whose prideful self-assertion has broken down under the galling consciousness of captivity to the powers of sin and death, who feels the horror of having lifted his hand against the final ends of Infinite Truth and Goodness, who would gladly be the least of all God's creatures if he might but feel himself in free and peaceful accord with all that is true and good, — what will be the effect on him? Is it not always that expressed by the well-known hymn? —

"Thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come!"

The new disclosures of the Father's qualities in and through the Son, the pity that knows no limits, the love that did not hesitate to send the Son in search of the lost, to divest itself in that Son of the awful form of Deity, ay, to descend to death and the grave, — this love, brought home to the religious consciousness, draws from it the joyous response, I come, and thereby opens once more the long-closed avenues of immediate communion between the Father and the sinful but repentant spirit. That cry, "I come," is the birth-cry of faith, the first expression of restored trust and confidence.

Thus the *external* general revelation has produced its effect. It has restored communion between the Infinite and the finite; and let us also note that it has begun the change of the religious consciousness common to all men into the specific form of the Christian consciousness. But the historical revelation is not yet complete. There now follow that class of divine manifestations which I have named the internal individual revelation, — the operations of grace, as the theologians often say. As they enter into the life of the individual,

they are necessarily repeated for each individual. It is not easy to enumerate or describe them. We can know them only through their effects. For the same reason, it is not possible to know whether they be, so to speak, separate visitations of divine power, or should rather be conceived as results of the abiding presence of the Divine Spirit in and with the human spirit. The latter seems to be the Scriptural view, and agrees best with the divine omnipresence. To speak in the language of St. Paul, when the penitent turns to Him in faith, God sends into his soul the Spirit of his Son, whereby he cries Abba Father. That act of power is the divine answer to the sinner's faith. Its result is the consciousness of forgiveness and restoration to divine favor which by sin was felt to be lost and forfeited. The indwelling Spirit replaces the old fear of God by active love for God, and joins, according to the apostle's representation, with the soul itself in affirming its sonship to God (Rom. v. 5; viii. 16). And that this sonship may be real, and not merely titular, the creative touch of the Almighty renovates the decayed powers of the spiritual nature, restores the right balance between the spiritual and physical, the reason and the appetites, and reinstates the higher in authority over the lower. Hence St. Paul says, "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good

works." The fruits of the Spirit, he says again, are love, joy, peace, — general Christian habits of mind, as Lightfoot explains; longsuffering, kindness, beneficence, — virtues that come out in social life; faithfulness, meekness, temperance, — principles of all-sided application to conduct.

Now it cannot be questioned that all these results are such as must affect the consciousness of the subject. They are matters of experience, and therefore verifiable. They cannot be figments of the imagination, born of apostolic enthusiasm, and reproduced now and then in mystically inclined individuals. If that were the case, all faith in their reality must have perished centuries ere now. Nor are they of such a nature that the individual subject of them can easily mistake them. He has the same criterion by which to judge of their reality which the man in the gospel applied who said: "One thing I know, — that whereas I was blind, I now see." The Christian can bring his experiences to a similar test. And when he does, can there be doubt what its effect will be on his certainty concerning the doctrines involved in them? When he reflects that God, whom he once dreaded as the infinitely righteous, has now become to his thought the God of infinite compassion and boundless love, — a conception never reached by man; that he himself, once a wretched wanderer, with-

out God and without hope in the world, has been lifted into the glorious liberty of the children of God, — can he doubt that the Christ whose works and words produced this change, and gave him, the captive of sin and death, the power to become a son of God, is indeed the eternal Son, the express image of the Father, who in him was reconciling the world to himself? When he contrasts his former moral impotence, the feebleness of his will to resist temptation, which forced him to exclaim, "Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" with the new spiritual energies that now pervade his being, so that he spends his days in joyous service to God and God's creatures, and feels "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me," can he hesitate to accept the apostolic teaching concerning the new creation by the Holy Spirit? Manifestly, the Christian consciousness is not certain of its own experiences only, but also of the facts by which those experiences are produced, and consequently of the doctrines which state those facts.

True, it is possible to conceive of the facts as truly apprehended and truly described in single disjointed propositions, and yet entertain misgivings as to the validity and certainty of the combination of these elements in larger dogmatic statements. The facts that show the divine power of

Christ may be incontestable, and the deduction made from them that Christ is God Incarnate may also be true. So the results produced by the Holy Ghost may be rightly held to infer the Deity of the Holy Ghost; but can we also repose confidently on the further inference that he is a personal agent? And if we can, what reason have we to rely upon the further reasoning that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are so related in one Triunity as the church teaches? Does not the attesting function of the Christian consciousness cease to have any value here? Well, suppose it did? No one, I believe, is in perishing need of absolute certainty on all points of dogma. With the great practical verities of the Christian faith secure, uncertainty as to our modes of combining them in intellectual apprehensions is of no great practical moment. But the extent of this uncertainty is by no means so unlimited as we sometimes think. When you compare dogmatic system with dogmatic system, — taking, of course, the systems, not of isolated or eccentric individuals, but of persons who, like Dr. Hodge, for instance, stand forth as classic representatives of the theological consciousness of large communities of Christians, — you find great variety in form and method, and no little divergence on points of remoter bearing, but, after all, substantial unity in the apprehension of the grand outlines of Christian

truth. And here, too, the Christian consciousness comes into play. It has one phase which I have not yet brought out. It is, as already observed, fellowship in knowledge, — fellowship, first with God, but secondly with men of like Christian spirit. The Christian community realizes the promise of the Redeemer to send the Spirit of Truth to guide his people into truth. That condition is brought about in the living church of the living God to which the prophet looked forward when he promised Jerusalem, — then in the dust of humiliation, — "All thy children shall be taught of God." The church, — and, mind you, I use this term in no narrow, artificially restricted sense, — the church is not a human society, held together by a constitution and by-laws; it is, so far as it really exists, the sphere in which the Holy Ghost dwells and works. Under his efficacious power, thinking as well as living — I should say thinking as a prominent element in living — is guided no less than the will and the affections. How could it be otherwise? If the new creation of the soul by divine power be real, how can it fail to reach the mind as well as the spirit? Not to add to the natural endowment, but to aid and develop it. It sets it free from the disturbing influence of sin, which previously confused and darkened it, and made it uncongenial with spiritual truth, — and with that alone are we

here concerned. St. Paul, whose profound personal experience, if nothing else, gives authority to his words, declares that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him," — yes, foolishness, just as music is foolishness to the man who has no ear; "neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The Saviour expresses the same truth when he says, "If any man be willing to do the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." Turn the natural man into the spiritual, make him willing to do the will of God, — the very work accomplished in the renewal by the Holy Ghost, — and you open all his latent powers of spiritual insight and intuition. His natural abilities are quickened, he is made confident and eager, yet reverent and docile, because his judgment is sobered. Place such a person in society with like-minded fellows, and there arises an externally indeterminable, perhaps, but none the less real, organic body, of which the Holy Ghost is the all-animating soul, who uses each member according to his connate aptitudes for service to the whole. There are diversities of operations: to one is given the word of wisdom, — the power of unfolding and enforcing truth for immediately practical uses; to another, the word of knowledge, — the deeper speculative

apprehension of truth in its manifold relations; but it is the Spirit of God that worketh all in all. This doctrine, so characteristic of St. Paul's whole conception of Christianity, and so far-reaching in its results, is but the unavoidable corollary of the fundamental experience that through faith man is not only justified, but new-created, brought back to his normal self and to his normal relations of intercommunion with God and his fellow-men. Do we, then, make the church infallible? By no means. Infallibility would imply the destruction by the Spirit of the freedom and personality of the individual or congregation in whom he dwells. The Holy Ghost is not a despotic ruler, but a gentle, patient teacher. But he is ever-present; and as surely as the Church of God has never ceased to be, so surely does he exercise in it his teaching, guiding function.

The bearing of this conception of the church as a God-taught body, on the results of its dogma-building function, is obvious. It does not make creeds, and articles of faith, or systems of theology infallible, but it does insure, beyond peradventure, that nothing can become part and parcel of the church's living, permanent conviction that has not its roots deep down in the experience of the Christian soul. Teachers may err, one here, another there; but the free interchange of thought, carried

on in the spirit of Christ, eliminates the error and makes the truth more evident and clear. And on the other hand, nothing that is so rooted in the Christian consciousness can be permanently surrendered or misapprehended. It may for a time drop out of sight, yea, be discarded as ancient error. For the church, like the waiting virgins of the parable, may fall asleep. The divine life is in human vessels. Sleep may even be necessary under these finite conditions. But the Divine Spirit neither sleeps nor slumbers. He but awaits the favorable conjunction, the time and season appointed of the Father, to invigorate the old consciousness and restore the old truth to its rightful place and efficacy.

It has doubtless occurred to some of you, as an objection to what has been advanced, that the Christian experience of most of us, who have been brought up in the Christian community, lacks the vividness, the overwhelming intensity, which characterized that of the early church. That is true. The age of the apostles and Christian fathers was one of mighty, creative energy. It produced in the individual and in society changes of revolutionary violence. It called forth embittered intellectual combats and physical persecutions, that raised the Christian consciousness to the highest pitch of self-assertion. It was that that conquered the wisdom

of the heathen world and overthrew its gods, and illumined the martyr's face with a sheen of glory brighter than the flames that enwrapped his body. The experience of most Christians of later days is undoubtedly of a different type.

But though of a different type, it is not less real. Most of us can probably make less direct application of the contrast between the prodigal herding swine and the prodigal reinstated in his father's home. If we have a consciousness of an irreligious part of life, — and who has not? for the part or parts need not to cover years of time, — it brings back to us the sense of weariness, emptiness, disharmony, such as underlies the query seriously asked by some, Whether life be worth living. It is the consciousness of an essentially negative, dead state of the soul. Compare with that the consciousness of your best days or hours, which is one of spiritual life and vigor, of ready response to the good and true, of comfort in disappointment and cheerful patience in affliction or adversity, and you will find that you too have an immovable basis of certainty within yourself. Indeed, in more than one respect your experience is far preferable to one of the more obtrusive type, which is more liable to prove delusive and transient.

Besides, the Christian, like any other communal consciousness, comes to its fullest and clearest de-

velopment only in the few. Nations, schools of thought, professions even, and trade-guilds, have peculiar forms of consciousness, growing out of peculiar experiences. And all likewise have their leaders and prophets, — individuals who most clearly feel and apprehend the life of the particular body, and all that that life includes. The nation finds them in its patriotic heroes, statesmen, and orators; the school, in its founders, teachers, and authors; the profession or trade-guild, in those who best express by precept and example what all feel to be the ideal of their pursuit. So in the Christian commonwealth there are those in whom the life of the whole manifests itself with extraordinary intensity and perfection. In them the power of sin and guilt, the renovating effects of Christ's redemption, the animating indwelling of the Spirit, are attended by experiences equal in force and definiteness to any impressions made on the consciousness through the outer senses. It is these who, in their several degrees and according to their other endowments, in official stations or as private members, as pastors, preachers, teachers, hymn-writers, singers, devout worshipers, busy workers, cheerful sufferers, — whatsoever, wheresoever they be, — become to others the interpreters of those phenomena of inner spirit-life which their own consciousness presents in obscurer forms.

Thus aided by the life and spirit of the whole body, they, too, are able to know of the doctrine that it is of God.

But, it may be asked, must we then conclude that all those who dissent from the doctrine of the Trinity, as accepted by Christendom at large, are without the pale of the Christian family? Or, to change from the abstract to the concrete, must we hold that no Arian or Socinian can have the witness of the Spirit that he is a child of God? — that, as the so-called Athanasian symbol says, not firmly believing the Catholic faith, he cannot be saved? Far from it! That creed itself shows how easily the speculative faculty, divorcing itself from the Christian consciousness, may either go beyond or contravene its testimony. That is precisely what happened in New England Unitarianism. It ignored the Christian consciousness of the ages, and trusted to the speculative reason to reconstruct the Christian doctrine. But an error of the head does not necessarily imply an unrenovated soul. The old theology is full of speculative errors. The worst of all, perhaps, is that confusion of saving faith with the acceptance of a dogmatic system, which goes back almost to the age of the apostles, and inspires the damnatory utterances of the Athanasian creed. But faith, true faith, the trustful response of the human soul to the self-revealing love

of God, lived notwithstanding the error. Speculative theology has its uses, great and valuable; but system may follow system, in a process of endless upbuilding and down-tearing, without serious damage to anybody. It is but the intellectually reared superstructure; the facts and doctrines attested by the Christian consciousness furnish the divine foundations. The superstructure may fall every hundred years; the foundations are eternal.[1]

I have utterly failed of my aim in this lecture if I have not helped some of you to a clearer apprehension of what is or is not involved in the acceptance or rejection of any theories concerning the inspiration and absolute infallibility of the Scriptures. There is probably nothing that involves many a young student of theology in such serious mental difficulty, not to say distress, as the finding that the critical study of the Bible unsettles the notions concerning the sacred volume which he previously held. It takes him a good while to find himself in those that are offered in their place. It seems like the subversion of his dearest treasure, — like the extinguishment of the

[1] I am glad to call attention to a book published since this lecture was written, — *The Evidence of Christian Experience*, Ely Lectures for 1890, by Professor Stearns, of the Bangor Theological Seminary.

one light that promised to guide his feet in safety through the labyrinth of error and darkness. But there lies his mistake. What is taken away and what is offered in its place are both theories, — mere theories. It is impossible to construct an absolutely certain theory on the subject; it may be impossible to construct one that shall be even negatively unobjectionable, or one that will explain all the phenomena to be explained. But no truth is thereby endangered. Was there ever a surer, more boldly triumphant faith than Luther's? Yet we all know with what freedom he read the sacred books. Christianity is not such a tender, exotic plant that its life depends on any theories of ours. It is not such a mechanically built-up structure of ideas and conceptions that it must needs rest on the foundations of an infallible book. It is the life of God in humanity, through its union with the Son. Not the book bears it, but it bears the book. And yet the book is of enduring normative authority. It gives the facts of the revelation of God in the Son, together with an authentic though incomplete interpretation of those facts by the Christian consciousness of the creative period. The facts no one can alter; and every phase and content of the Christian consciousness of later days must legitimatize itself by its harmony with, and direct lineal descent from, that of the apostolic age.

LECTURE VIII.

THE TRINITY: ITS HISTORICAL REVELATION.

THE statement of the doctrine of the Trinity, with which we are all most familiar, is that implied in the opening petitions of the Litany. We address successively God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, as of equal power and mercy, and then call upon "the Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God." The first of the Thirty-nine Articles is of the same tenor: beginning with the existence, attributes, and works of "one living and true God," it goes on to declare that in the "unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." The older creeds, especially the Niceno-Constantinopolitan and the Athanasian, present similar statements in more expanded form, and seek to guard them against misapprehension and perversion, but neither add to their contents nor undertake to explain them. We may therefore define the doctrine which is now to occupy our attention as the doctrine of three persons in one God; or, better, as

the doctrine which teaches us to conceive of God as the Triune Being. A fuller definition would be of little service to us at present. An intelligible definition presupposes the fullest practicable survey of that which is to be defined. One stumbling-block, however, already verbally removed by the substitution of the words, "God as the Triune Being," for the phrase, "three Persons and one God," must detain us yet a moment. The word "person" is not to be understood in the sense of an individual self. That would justify the arithmetical objection: How can three be one? It does not imply that there are three personalities, three different wills or egos, in the Divine Being. There is but one person in God, in the sense in which we now use the word; but in the one divine personality there are three different modes of subsistence, and to these the Latin fathers applied the term *persona*, while the Greeks used *hypostasis*. It was impossible to find a term in either language perfectly adapted to describe a relation in the Divine Being of which men had no experimental knowledge. Whatever word was taken must be specially defined to suit the emergency. But it may be doubted whether the Latins would have taken "person," if that word had had for them the same sense it has for us. It meant originally a mask, and then the part or character in a play repre-

sented by an actor. And though it also came to mean an individual, it did not seize on the selfhood of the individual, so as to make that its prominent content. It was used, much as the uneducated use it now, very indefinitely. You look in vain in any lexicon of classical Latin for the word *personalitas*. Latin psychology had not reached the point where the word became necessary. When, then, we speak of three persons in the Godhead, let it be understood that it means something very different from tri-personality. What that something is, we shall better be able to see hereafter.

I shall treat of the doctrine of the Trinity under two heads: 1. The history of its revelation to and apprehension by the Christian consciousness; and, 2. Its later speculative construction, *i. e.* the attempts to exhibit and justify it in terms of the reason.

The history of its revelation divides again into three periods: 1. The preparatory period; 2. The period of its positive revelation in history; and, 3. The period of interpretative revelation, the results of which appear in the formulation of the doctrine.

With respect to the preparatory period, it is very necessary to distinguish clearly between the divine education of the Hebrew people for the disclosure ultimately to be made, and pre-intimations of the doctrine. The proposition that the actual revela-

tion of the Trinity was made through the Incarnation of the Logos is not more true than that not only Hebrew history, but all history, is one great process of preparation for that central event. But it is another question, whether the character of the preparation, while in progress, was sufficiently understood to suggest to the minds of those then living any thoughts, however vague, of those distinctions in the being of God which the doctrine of the Trinity declares. There can be no doubt that the Hebrew prophets looked for a presence of God among men altogether unparalleled in earlier history; but were they thereby led to thoughts about the nature and being of God that can in any sense be considered anticipatory of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity? That is the point now before us. I need not say that many Old Testament passages, often adduced as proof-texts, have no bearing on the subject whatever. When God is represented as saying, "Let *us* make men," or, "Go to, let *us* go down to confound the speech of men," the explanation is that God is conceived of as a king surrounded by his ministers and counselors, with whom he condescendingly identifies himself. The threefold Holy, Holy, Holy, of the seraphs' hymn, is only an emphatic repetition, like the cry of the falsely confident people of Jerusalem, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of

the Lord, is this." That the prophets did not look for a divine Messiah, in the strict sense of the word "divine," is now admitted by nearly all exegetes; but, granting that they did, there is absolutely nothing to show that it ever, even for a moment, suggested the inquiry, "How can the Messiah be God, and yet God be one?" It may be true, as Dorner says, that if traces of the Trinity exist in heathen thought, their absence in the Hebrew religion cannot but appear surprising. Yet, assuredly, no such traces can be rightly found in the fact that Jehovah, who says, "I am that I am," also says, "I am he," thus, as Dorner says, placing himself over against himself, and virtually asserting a distinction in himself which he enunciates in the same breath with his oneness. Nor can I see on what ground Dorner finds another trace in the words of God in Isaiah: "I blot out thy transgressions for my own sake." It is true that in these words God may be said to present himself as final end to himself as the actor who pursues that end; but neither this nor the other passage presents forms of speech which men do not frequently use of themselves.

Much has been written concerning a certain *Mal'akh Yaweh* (messenger of Jehovah) who appears in the Old Testament. I say "a certain" *Mal'akh Yaweh*, because it is not every *Mal'akh Yaweh* that

appears to which I refer. In most passages the *Mal'akh Yaweh* is simply an angel sent by the Almighty to communicate his will or purposes to men. These angels are distinctly apprehended as created intelligences, wholly separate and diverse from God. But there is a class of passages in which the *Mal'akh Yaweh* appears as a self-manifestation of God. He appears indeed in human form, and speaks of God in the third person. But those to whom he appears are oppressed by the consciousness that they have seen God and must die. They see in him an impersonation of Deity such as is found in no other angel. He is to their minds not merely a messenger from God, but the revelation of the being of God. The Christian fathers for the most part identify him with the Logos of the New Testament. But there is as much reason to adopt the opinion of many modern writers who hold that he is Jehovah himself appearing in human form, for he is explicitly addressed as Jehovah (Judges vi. 11–24). The question for us, however, is, What was the opinion of those who heard or read of these appearances of *Mal'akh Yaweh?* They separate him from God and identify him with God in the same breath. The only satisfactory explanation is to be found in the Hebrew conception of God as the infinite and transcendent one, who cannot enter directly into contact

with the finite. The idea underlies the whole doctrine of angelic mediation. On ordinary occasions, he sends an angel with a message, or makes winds or flaming fire his ministers. But on other, rarer occasions, when no created messenger would suffice, and he would draw nigh to man in his own person, he veils his deity in human form, and thus appears to man. There is no thought here touching any internal distinctions within the divine being itself. But there is the external, relative distinction between God as the hidden and God as the manifested. There is the conception both of the need of God's entering into personal relations with men, and of the impossibility of his doing so without some form of mediation. The first prerequisite of the doctrine of the Trinity, the fundamental thought without which it could never have found acceptance, is here, but nothing more.

While the angel of Jehovah is found only in the older parts of the Old Testament Scriptures, the "Spirit of God," the "Holy Spirit," seems to take the place of angelic ministries in the age of the prophets. That the Spirit, although sometimes rhetorically personified, is nevertheless conceived as an impersonal power or influence exerted by God, is made very evident from the repeated use of the expression to "pour out" the Spirit. It is true, the same expression occurs in the New

Testament, but manifestly as a reminiscence of Old Testament phraseology. Its origin can be explained only upon the supposition that the Spirit was regarded as impersonal. The same is true of the expressions "to baptize in the Spirit" and "to give to drink of the Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 13; cf. the Septuagist on Isa. xxix. 10).

Very striking and beautiful is the self-presentation of the Divine Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs, chap. viii. 22 ff.: —

> The Lord produced me in the beginning of his way,
> Before his works of old.
> I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning,
> Or ever the earth was.
> When there were no depths, I was brought forth.
> When there were no fountains abounding with water,
> Before the mountains were settled,
> Before the hills, was I brought forth.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> When he marked out the foundations of the earth
> Then I was by him as a master-workman,
> And I was daily his delight,
> Rejoicing always before him.

It is possible to understand these lines — and there are many more of like character — as nothing more than literary form, intended to celebrate the divine attribute of knowledge and insight. But in that case the personification is carried to an almost absurd extreme. How could a monotheist conceive of God as producing, bringing forth,

an attribute without which he would lack an essential element of Deity? We have here apparently the same conception, already noted, of God as so separate from finite things that he can come into contact with them only through intermediate forms or beings. Hence, before creation, he brings forth Wisdom, who then, from the very inception of the work, is his assistant, — his master-workman. She is a species of demiurge, thrown off from God's own being by an act of creation. Such, at all events, is the form given to this doctrine in the apocryphal book called the Wisdom of Solomon. Wisdom is there represented as a "pure effluence from the glory of the Almighty;" she is "a reflection of God, the eternal light;" the "undimmed mirror of his activity," an "image of his goodness" (chap. vii. 25 f.). She is "a breath" of the divine omnipotence, — "a holy Spirit," yea, "the Holy Spirit of God" (chap. ix. 17). She dwells before the throne of God. Initiated into God's own insight, his counselor in creation, she knows all his works. Having proceeded from God before the creation of the world, she was present when he accomplished it, acted then as God's organ, as now he still does all things through her. Hence she is the generatrix of all that is, — the highest artisan in the universe of things. She is intelligent, all-seeing, holy; the source of all higher enlightenment and

moral goodness in men. From generation to generation she enters into pure souls, and makes them friends and prophets of God.[1] That this is not mere rhetorical personification, but actual hypostasizing, is indubitable. Wisdom is here an objectively real existence, produced by God, or emanating from him, intimately connected with him, yet distinct from him.

The book of the Wisdom of Solomon carries us well down toward the time of Philo the Jew, and the generation immediately preceding that of Christ. Indeed, some have held that Philo was the author of the book, because in some respects its doctrine concerning wisdom and his concerning the Logos are closely related. Philo's fundamental position is that God, as the All-perfect, cannot come in contact with matter. It would defile him, yet God is the Author of all that is. Hence he must work through intermediate agencies, who shall be such as neither to defile him nor take defilement from matter. These intermediate agencies are subsumed or comprehended in the Logos, who is the Divine Reason. They are probably conceived by Philo as emanations from God, *i. e.* so far as he conceives them as hypostases. There lies the difficulty of the Philonic Logos and the several separate Logoi of which he is the sum.

[1] Chap vii. 28. See Bruch, *Weisheit der Hebräer*, p. 340 ff.

As creative agents, they must be in God and share his power; and as able to come into contact with matter, they must be true hypostases separate from him. The consequence is perpetual vacillation. Now they are divine attributes, and now hypostases. When God fills them with his own life and power, they must be attributes of himself; when they come to empty themselves into matter and the world, they must be hypostatic subsistences. And what is true of the several Logoi is true of him who is the sum total of them all, — the Logos.

While the speculations of the Alexandrian Jews were thus crystallizing about the Wisdom of God and the Logos or Reason of God, the Palestinian Jews were running a somewhat parallel course with what they called the *Memra* of Jehovah, *i. e.* the Word of God. Our knowledge of it is almost wholly derived from the Targums, the Chaldee paraphrases of the Old Testament books, in which considerable of the Jewish theology of that cast is inwoven with the translation. According to this theology, the word by which God speaks and it is done is not a vocable, or mere sound, but becomes, so to speak, objectivated as it leaves the divine lips. The conception is built up on the basis of Isa. lv. 11: "As the rain cometh down, and the snow, from heaven," etc., "so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not

return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." The *Memra* is the representative of God when he works in history or enters into personal intercourse with his people. As in all these doctrines of mediation, it is difficult or rather impossible, to determine the extent of the hypostasizing process. The *Memra*, however, is believed, trusted in, prayed to, treated in all respects as a personal being. It is he who creates the world, who wrought in the history of the Hebrew patriarchs, who redeemed the people out of Egypt, who gave the law from Sinai, and was present in the tabernacle. And so, through all the later history of Israel. God has wholly withdrawn into the hiding of his eternal glory, and the *Memra* is on all occasions his representative.

The conclusion to which this all too imperfect survey leads us is that in one sense there was absolutely no preparation in previous history for the doctrine of the Trinity. There is nowhere even a lisp of any eternal hypostatic distinction within the being of God. From the *Mal'akh Yaweh* down to the *Memra*, every mediation is between God and the world, not between God and God. And whether it be conceived as a mere form, a concealing garb, so to speak, put on by God himself, or as a distinct and objectively real hypostasis, it is

always created, originated by divine power. There is no idea of eternal, coexistent hypostases in God himself. There are only forms, phases, or media for intercourse with finite things. In another sense, however, there *was* a preparation, and one whose importance it is not easy to overestimate. In the first place, the Hebrew people had come to the conviction that God as he is in his eternal perfection cannot enter into direct personal relations with the world and mankind. It makes no difference to us at present to what they ascribed that impossibility, — whether they found it inherent in God as God, in the unsuitableness or impurity of matter, or, where alone it really lies, in the moral degeneracy of men. They had it; and it grew stronger and stronger as their conception of God became fuller and clearer. The more they knew of God and of themselves, the wider and more impassable became the gulf that separated one from the other. If, then, God and man were ever to become truly one in spirit, thought, and feeling, — and that this was the real goal of man's existence they were equally certain of, — God must of necessity come forth out of his eternal concealment, and manifest himself to man through some adequate personal mediator, with whom on the one hand God, on the other man, can enter into perfect communion. In that thought, you perceive, lies latent the very idea

of the Incarnation. In the second place, the vagueness that had characterized all previous Hebrew conceptions of the forms or media through which God manifested himself became a useful means of transition to the reception of the doctrine of the Incarnation. Whether the *Mal'akh Yaweh* of the earlier age was, so to speak, God himself in disguise, or whether he was a personally distinct being, filled with divine life and qualities, and if so, how this could be; how the Wisdom, the Logos, Memra, of later times were to be conceived in their essential relations to the Most High, — these were questions which they never pondered, certainly never definitely concluded. Their conceptions of them were in a state of permanent fluctuating fluidity. But this defect of thought became a positive practical help when the Incarnation was announced to them as an accomplished fact. When Jesus said, "The Father is in me, and I am in the Father, — I and my Father are one," he declared nothing at which the spiritually receptive Jew must take offense; for he said nothing which for substance Wisdom, the Logos, or Memra had not also said and claimed. In a word, analytical thought interposed no obstacle; for the Hebrew had never analyzed his thought, or carried it to its last result.

We pass now to the positive revelation itself, —

to contemplate it in the process of accomplishment. But how can that be done, seeing that, as an external event that took place once for all, it belongs to the past, and must withal, like creation, have been of such a nature as to be apparent only in its results? Just so, — apparent only in its results; and it is in those results that we must study it. Not now, however, in all its results, but in those that followed immediately, in the age nearest the event. The nature of the investigation may be more clearly seen, perhaps, if I say that as the revelation of the Trinity is like the process of creation in being cognizable only in its results, so it is like it in another respect. We have no scientific, authentic, written record of the process of creation. What was done, in what order, with what intent, in what way, is to be collected from the evidence, the dumb, unspoken testimony, of the things that were created. So we have no scientific record of the various processes of God's activity in the revelation of the Triunity of his being. We have authentic information, no doubt, concerning a few facts and outward events, more or less closely connected with the revelation, such as the birth, passion, death, and resurrection of Christ. But these may be regarded as the body, the revelation itself being the spirit. The revelation itself must be collected from the testimony of those in whom it

was realized. Now these are, first, Christ, who was at once the personal medium of the revelation, and as true Man its first recipient; and secondly, the earliest body of Christian believers. In a word, the revelation must be studied by us as it was apprehended by the self-consciousness of Christ, and by the Christian consciousness of the church in the New Testament period, both of which find expression in the gospels and epistles respectively.

To make thorough work of this would require a book, and no small one. My time permits me only to devote a few sentences to it, — barely enough to indicate the method of the inquiry. And of course I must give you my exegesis of the passages to which I shall refer, without a word in defense of it.

First, then, the self-consciousness of Jesus. It is most fully exhibited in the fourth gospel.[1] Jesus knows himself as the Son of God in an altogether unique sense; how unique, is seen in the fact that when the unreceptive Jews charge him, on account of it, with making himself equal with God, so far from denying their inference, he proceeds to unfold more fully than before the divine life-giving

[1] If I were required to select two books on which exclusively to devolve the defense of the genuineness of St. John's Gospel, I should unhesitatingly choose Ezra Abbot's severely critical *Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, and E. H. Sears's genial work, *The Fourth Gospel the Heart of Christ.*

power involved in his Sonship (John v. 18 ff.) "God," he says to the Jews, "is not your Father, for if he were, you would love me; for I came forth out of him," *i. e.* derived my being from him (chap. viii. 42). Again: "My Father is the living Father, and I live on account of him," *i. e.* my Father is the source of life, and my life is both derived from him and like his (chap. vi. 57). "As the Father has life in himself, so he gave to the Son to have life in himself," *i. e.* the Son's derived life is, like the Father's, creative and inexhaustible, so that he can freely communicate of it to the spiritually dead (chap. v. 27). Expressions such as these can never be understood except as indicating the Redeemer's clear consciousness of that relation to the Father which the Nicene Creed afterwards sought to determine in the words, "begotten of the substance of the Father, God *of* God, Light *of* Light." Accordingly, the Saviour is conscious of having existed before his birth as man: "I have come down," he says, "from heaven." "No one has seen the Father, save he who is [=came] from God; he hath [=I have] seen the Father" (chap. vi. 38, 46). Again: "I came out of the Father, and came into the world" (chap. xvi. 28). "And now, O Father, glorify thou me in thy presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." "O Father, those whom thou hast

given me, I will that where I am they also be with me, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, because thou didst love me before the founding of the world" (chap. xvii. 5, 24). Moreover, he knows himself one and equal with the Father: "He who has seen me, has seen the Father; how then sayest thou, Philip, Show us the Father?" "I and the Father are one" (chap. xiv. 9 f.; x. 30). "He who hates me hates also my Father" (chap. xv. 23). "He who honors not the Son, honors not the Father; the Father has committed all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son as they honor the Father" (chap. v. 22, 23). That nevertheless he knows himself distinct from the Father is equally manifest: "I seek not my own will, but my Father's will, who sent me." "The Father who sent me, he has borne testimony concerning me" (chap. v. 30, 37). "My doctrine is not mine, but his who sent me" (chap. vii. 16). In like manner, he distinguishes between himself and the Holy Spirit on the one hand, and the Father and the Spirit on the other: "I will ask the Father, and he will give you *another* Paraclete [Helper], to be with you forever, the Spirit of Truth." "The Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and shall bring to your minds all that I said to you" (chap. xiv. 16 f., 26). Again:

"When the Paraclete shall have come, whom I will send from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father, he shall bear witness concerning me" (chap. xv. 26). "When he shall have come, the Spirit of Truth, he shall guide you into all the truth" (chap. xvi. 13). One or two citations more, to show (what, indeed, has already abundantly appeared) how clearly the Lord was conscious of his relations to the dead and dying world, as the only but overflowing source of life divine: "I am the bread of life," — "the living bread that came down from heaven; if any eat of this bread, he shall live forever" (chap. vi. 35, 51). "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me" (chap. xiv. 6).

We next proceed to gather a few utterances of the Christian consciousness of the church in the New Testament day. Bear in mind that they are not the sharply defined determinations of didactic theology, but the unstudied expressions of the common Christian heart and mind, designed to influence the life rather than to inform the intelligence. The only thoroughly effective way of getting at the thought of the apostolic church on this great subject is to read, think, and live one's self into the spirit of the whole New Testament, the book to

which the life of that church gave birth. The utterances I am about to adduce are only those whose bearing is most immediately evident. And as the whole life of the church is rooted in the Incarnation, I begin with that. "The Logos," says St. John, "became flesh and tabernacled among us." "God," says St. Paul, "sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law" (Gal. iv. 4). To the Philippians (chap. ii. 6 ff.) he writes of Christ Jesus, who, while "being in the form of God, did not think the being on an equality with God a thing to be clung to as men cling to booty, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." The preëxistence of the Logos, or Son of God, already included in these citations, is affirmed in unmistakable terms: "In the beginning was the Logos, and through him all things were made, not one thing excepted." "Through him and for him all things have been created," says St. Paul of Christ, "and he is *before* all things" (Col. i. 17). Concerning his Deity, and his relations to the Father, there are numerous utterances: "The Logos was with God, and the Logos was God." The Epistle to the Hebrews says of the Son, through whom God spake at the end of these days, that "he is the effulgence of the Father's glory, and the impress of his being" (chap. i. 3). St. Paul names him "the image of

the invisible God," and says that "in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." St. John says of the Incarnate Logos that "we beheld his glory, a glory such as marks an *only-begotten* Son who comes from the Father;" and again he says, "God no one has ever seen; the only-begotten Son, who is [now again] in the bosom of the Father, he declared him" (chap. i. 18).

Concerning the Holy Spirit, the utterances of the Christian consciousness in the New Testament are less clear, so far as the doctrine of the Trinity is concerned. He is constantly spoken of as the teaching, leading, indwelling Spirit. "No man can say that Jesus is Lord but by him," *i. e.* the Spirit must pervade the inner life, effect a reconstruction of it, before there can be true and loyal submission to Christ. This passage alone is sufficiently indicative of the importance of the Spirit's work. The fact that the bodies of Christians are temples in which the Holy Spirit dwells is urged as a most forcible incentive to holiness of life; from which it follows that the Spirit is of divine purity and nature. He is spoken of as testifying with our spirit that we are children of God, and as helping our infirmity by making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Christians are warned against grieving him. But in all this there is little to indicate whether he is consid-

ered as distinct from the Father and the Son or not. Of his divinity there is no doubt. He is the Spirit who searcheth into the deep things of God, even as the spirit of a man knows all there is in the man, — which proves him divine and eternal; but is he conceived as really personal, and not merely rhetorically so represented? He is named indifferently the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, or simply the Spirit. If either designation predominates, it is that of the Spirit of Christ. Indeed, Christ himself is once spoken of by St. Paul as the Spirit: "Now the Lord [*i. e.* Christ] is the Spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 17). True, the immediately following words — "and where the Spirit of the Lord [Christ] is, there is liberty" — imply a distinction between Christ and the Spirit, showing (as Meyer says) that the preceding sentence is not meant of absolute, personal identity, but is spoken from a dynamic point of view. The one thing evident from all these names is, that the Spirit is divine in origin and power; but whether he is regarded as a personal subsistence, and if so what is his exact relation to the essential being of the Father or the Son, does not appear. It is surprising, at first sight, that when the Saviour had so clearly enunciated the personality of the Spirit of Truth, the earliest Christians should show no more decided conscious-

ness of the fact. But it may not be very difficult to account for it. The Holy Spirit was an Old Testament conception and experience. It was more than possible to retain old forms of speech and old habits of thinking about the Spirit, notwithstanding the fact that the work of the Spirit was carried on with wholly unprecedented life and vigor. But the Incarnation of the Son of God, that event of surpassing import, which made all things new, involved conceptions for which no old forms of speech and thought existed. It must be expressed in new phraseology. Besides, Christ had appeared in visible, tangible human form, whereby they were forced to make some efforts to define to their own minds his relations to God, or rather to think out the thought that lay in the words Father and Son as applied to God and Christ. But the Holy Spirit, although he came with new life, came with no new name, and appeared no otherwise than he had always done. Even though his personality, unknown to the Old Testament, were recognized, it was possible still to think of him habitually as divine influence or energy, while also habitually personifying him as of old. That this is what actually occurred is, I think, a reasonable inference from all the phenomena presented by the New Testament. The old phraseology obscured, if not the apprehension, certainly

the expression, of that part of the new revelation concerning the Holy Spirit which in its own nature presented the greatest difficulty to monotheistic preconceptions.

The conclusions suggested by references to the Son and the Holy Spirit separately are borne out, I might say corroborated, by a number of passages in which the three divine names or agents are conjoined. The baptismal formula, which doubtless originated with the Saviour himself, cannot consistently with his other utterances be otherwise understood than as indicating three persons in such a sense as not to conflict with the unity of God. But just what that sense is, the formula itself does not declare, and no word from any apostle or other New Testament writer explains. That is, we cannot certainly ascertain how the Trinity here implied was construed by the apostolic church. The same may be said of the Pauline benediction: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." The personality of the Holy Ghost is here not necessarily implied. I pass over Ephes. ii. 18, and 1 Pet. i. 2, as throwing no new light on the subject. This leaves only 1 Cor. xii. 4–6:[1] "Now there are diversi-

[1] The confessedly spurious words, 1 John v. 7, have been rightly omitted in the late revision of the English version.

ties" — or better, divisions, distributions — "of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are distributions of ministries, but the same Lord [*i. e.* Christ]; and there are distributions of workings, but the same God [*i. e.* the Father]." Here the three names appear in separate and distinct relations to the several lines of Christian activity. The Holy Spirit stands first, because the whole chapter treats of gifts, charisms, which are the result of the indwelling Spirit operating through the natural powers of men. The ministries or services are connected with Christ, the Head and Ruler of his body the church, to whom as Lord all service is rendered. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." And finally the workings, *i. e.* the performance of deeds of power, are connected with God the Father, as the source of all power, the cause of all causes. It is difficult to avoid the impression that we have here the conception of an economic Trinity, — that is, of a Trinity which may be such not necessarily and eternally, but only in manifestations, or in the apprehensions of men, who name God differently as he manifests himself in different works.

From this rapid review it is evident that the fully developed church doctrine of the Trinity is not expressed in the New Testament. There is no

clear distinction drawn between the idea of the Trinity as eternally immanent in the being of God, and the idea of an economic Trinity as just explained. Neither one statement nor the other is so expressed as at once to exclude the other. Indeed, there is no indication that the distinction presented itself at all to the consciousness of writers or speakers. If next we ask, Which view is the natural logical sequence of the New Testament utterances? I reply that to my mind there is a decided difference as to this between the sayings of Jesus and the expressions of the apostles, except those of the prologue to the fourth gospel. The apostles *can* be so understood as that their words imply only an economic Trinity. Not so the language of Christ and St. John. That inevitably leads to the idea of eternal, necessary hypostatic distinctions in the Divine Being. This difference is not unnatural. The self-consciousness of the Incarnate Son, however affected by his humanity, might be expected to speak more clearly on the nature of Deity than the Christian consciousness of believers. The earliest church did not rise to the same height of insight into this mystery as the God-man. And if St. John did, it must not be forgotten that his gospel, where alone we find the expression of his higher ground, was written long after the epistles of St. Paul, who is really the

only other New Testament source of knowledge on this subject. Fitted by nature for thought on so profound a subject, St. John had also had time for thought. In short, I cannot agree with those who think that the utterances of the whole New Testament are consistent with the assumption of an economic Trinity; nor, on the other hand, with those who hold the opposite opinion, and consider the immanent ontological Trinity to be throughout necessarily implied. That is true in one sense. An economic Trinity, that is, a manifestation of God in three forms of work, so as to suggest three persons, logically leads to the ontological Trinity; for God cannot be conceived to manifest himself at one and the same time under different forms, unless there are in him differences of being, corresponding to these forms, and giving rise to them. For every act is the expression of his being, and cannot express it as other than it is. But the logical consequences of a position are not necessarily present to him who holds it. What I believe is, that most of the earliest Christians, teachers and taught, had no clearly defined consciousness that their conception of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost involved an eternal Trinity; but that, on the other hand, the consciousness of Jesus and the beloved disciple, without giving them all the definitions of the later church doctrine, assured them that these names had

their objective realities in the being of God. And hence the Nicene doctrine, so far as it relied on direct Scriptural authority, derived its strongest support from the fourth gospel.

Our review has also shown us that the relation of the several divine Persons *to each other* was not apprehended in any definite form. The Father is evidently conceived as the source of all things in the Deity as well as outside of it; for he is named Father especially in his relation to the Son, and in a less exclusive sense to believers. He is ὁ θεός, God, which term it is very doubtful whether it is ever applied to Christ or the Holy Ghost in the New Testament, except in the surprised outburst of Thomas, "My Lord and my God." [1] Christ is the Son — the only-begotten, St. John says. But how that begetting is to be understood is nowhere explained or hinted at. The Holy Ghost is *sent* by the Father, and *proceeds* from him; but neither phrase appears to imply more than local proximity, and the moral unity which that presupposes. The Saviour says: "The Spirit of Truth" ὃ παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορεύεται, "who proceeds from beside the Father," *i. e.* who is indeed the Spirit of Truth, because he goes forth from the immediate presence of the Father, the source of all truth. If the

[1] In the Apostolic Fathers, on the contrary, the term "God" is constantly used of Christ. Cf. Shedd, *Hist. Doct.*, i. 265 ff.

origin of the Holy Ghost is at all consciously referred to in the New Testament, it is in the expressions "Spirit of God" and "Spirit of Christ."

To sum up the result arrived at: The church of the New Testament was conscious of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as the sources of all divine life and power. It had the Trinity practically, but not in clearly conceived doctrinal representation. It had the thought-elements out of which the doctrine must inevitably be evolved, but it held them in simple, unarticulated juxtaposition, dominated only by the immovable conviction that God is one. Christ was the power of God and the wisdom of God; the Spirit of God was the ever-present Helper: in this there was no contradiction, and beyond this their thoughts did not habitually extend. And is not this the ordinary thought of all Christians in all ages? But it left two deep questions unasked: First. How are the three related to the one being? and secondly, How are they related to each other? It was with these questions that the church of the succeeding ages was forced to grapple.

LECTURE IX.

THE TRINITY: ITS INTERPRETATIVE REVELATION.

Of the three parts into which I divided the historical revelation of the Trinity, two have been considered. The third, the interpretative part of the process, must now engage us. That we are justified in viewing it as a constituent part of the revelation is almost self-evident. Nothing is more certain than that the doctrine of the Trinity sprang directly from the recognition of the Incarnation of God in Christ. The impulses to its conception and formulation are not to be sought in the philosophical speculations of the church fathers, but in their Christian consciousness. Philosophy aided in its development, but did not originate it. First came the assurance that God was in Christ (the immediate result of personal spiritual experience), and then came the endeavor to apprehend in thought the divine relations involved in the fact thus certified. The elaboration of the doctrine was the intellectual side of the spiritual new creation. Herein lies the guaranty of its substantial truth. The emergence of the doctrine was not

only historical, but historical revelation. It was revelation in and through the thinking of men whose whole being had been permeated with new life and power. To say that they were not infallible is only to say that the new creation in them had not reached completeness; but to say that, although renovated, they were not divinely guided in their thought — inspired — is to say that the union of man with God through Christ affects one part of the indivisible human personality, but not the other. Shall we admit that, in the Old Testament time of preparation, God made use of chosen men, specially endowed by nature and fitted by life-training, to lead and instruct his people, and then doubt that he has prophets and inspired thinkers in Christian ages? Such a doubt must either rest on inconsequent theories, or it must issue in a rejection of Christianity.

As to the close of the period of interpretative revelation, I scarcely need to say that it cannot be definitely fixed. We may be fully assured that the results hitherto attained can never be reversed or materially changed, without asserting that they contain the whole truth to which nothing can ever be added. For our present purpose, however, we may consider the period to be closed with the completion of the two great symbols, the Nicæno-Constantinopolitan and the so-called Athanasian.

It is therefore with the progressive formulation of the doctrine during the four centuries immediately after the apostolic age that we are now to busy ourselves.

The two questions which, as I said last week, came up for determination by the post-apostolic church, concerned the relations of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, respectively, to the one Divine Being and to each other. The fundamental thought of Christianity is, that in Christ God has become man. As soon as men began to analyze this conception, the question necessarily arose: In what sense is this to be understood? When we say, God became man, do we speak literally or figuratively? If literally, if Christ was really and truly God, was he alone God, or did God also continue to exist in the state of transcendence over all that is finite? If the latter, are we not driven to the admission of two Gods, one incarnate and the other transcendent and immutable? Or, if we distinguish between God and the Logos, affirming that the latter became man, how is the Logos related to the Godhead, and how to the human personality of Jesus the Christ? Similar questions were again suggested by the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

The working-out of problems of such profundity could not be accomplished in a day. And though

upon the whole there was constant progress, yet, as the mind of the church is the aggregate of many minds, absolute unanimity at any stage is not to be expected. Although the main wave rolled in one direction, it was crossed and chopped by others of less volume running in other directions. Hence those heated theological battles which the untheological mind finds it so difficult to reconcile with the divine character of Christianity. But beside the difficulty of the questions involved, and the limitations of the thinking mind, we are to consider two other conditions that deeply affected Christian thought on this subject, divided it, and retarded the final conclusion. These are, first, the unequal diffusion of the Christian consciousness through the nominal Christian body; and, secondly, the very different conceptions of God which prevailed among different classes of men before they came into contact with Christianity.

Let me dwell for a moment on the effects of the inequality of the Christian consciousness. If it be true, as I have insisted, that the Christian consciousness is the final and all-sufficient guaranty of Christian truth, how is it that this truth has been so variously apprehended, and has in every instance arrived at unanimity of statement only through previous diversity of representation? That is a fair question, which must be fairly answered. And

the answer is suggested in St. Paul's dictum, — "They are not all Israel who are of Israel." In other words, the church, the Christian communion, had in it, almost from the first, many who had no share, or one comparatively obscure, in the Christian experience. Almost? Judas was among the twelve, and the New Testament church, as incidentally depicted in the Epistles, is far from conformed to its ideal. St. Paul was hounded from place to place by teachers who apparently had nothing of Christianity but the name. A new force in the world is sure to draw to it many who have not found what they wished in the old condition. Despairing of the old, they take the new without really becoming one with it. You may find an illustration of this in the character of a part of the emigration from Europe to this country. Despairing of realizing their communistic ideas in the Old World, they come here, expecting to find them acceptable and practicable, if not actually operative. Whatever they find here, in the way of constitution and law, they interpret, not as the national consciousness interprets it, but in accordance with their own imported conceptions. So men came to Christianity. The Jew was disheartened about his nation, especially after the Romans destroyed the temple and the Holy City. The serious-minded heathen felt that his ances-

tral religion was dead and powerless. Meanwhile Christianity was advancing triumphantly, a new life-sphere in the midst of the old deadness. Naturally, average people who had just a spark of thought or life in them were attracted. They who thought more deeply, whether Jew or Gentile, might hold themselves aloof. But the mercurial multitude, ever ready for new things, poured into the church, just as among us they take up the latest literary novelty. Not all of this class were mere dilettanti, but very many of them never obtained a real and deep experience of the transforming power of Christianity. Nevertheless they counted among its more enlightened adherents, and here and there no doubt influenced the thinking of their fellows. But as the thinking so influenced was not dominated by the Christian consciousness, it failed to accord with it. Whether the thinkers were Jews or Gentiles did not essentially affect the result.

But there was another class, — a class which did experience the power of Christ, but explained it from a false intellectual basis. This leads us to the different conceptions of God entertained by persons before they came into contact with Christianity. Human thought about God has always divided on what we are accustomed to call transcendence or immanence, — taking the former word

as the direct contrary of the latter. The Jew, ever since the return from the captivity, had so emphasized the transcendence as to make him unable to conceive of God as coming into any other than mediated contact with man. The Greek was divided. So far as he accepted the Platonic philosophy or its later revivals, he took his place by the side of the Jew. But if he had yielded to the doctrines of the Stoics, a waning philosophy in the early Christian centuries, it is true, but yet by no means uninfluential; or if, despairing of the teachings of the schools, he had reverted to that of the poets, in which the genuine spirit of his race found expression, he could not but conceive of God as indwelling in all his works. This was what we may call his natural, native conception. Philosophy might override it, or hold it in abeyance, but could not eradicate it. And nothing was more natural, if for any reason philosophy lost its hold on him, than that he should feel himself attracted by the teaching of Christ, in the profound simplicity, poetic beauty, and all-pervading God-consciousness of whose own words — unrivaled by the noblest utterances that ever fell from apostolic lips — the most attractive thought of his ancestral religion seemed to meet him, purified of all error and raised to unspeakable sublimity. The consequences of these mental antecedents, as regards

the conception of the Trinity, may readily be inferred. The Jewish mind tended towards Ebionitism, *i. e.* the reception of Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, but also as mere man. The Greek adherent of the Platonic idea of transcendence might make Christ a mediator between God and men, but could not conceive of a real Incarnation. The natural Greek mind, on the other hand, not controlled by an adverse philosophy, had an innate readiness to incarnate Deity. It may be doubted whether the doctrine of the Trinity could ever have taken deep root on Jewish soil. The very vehemence of its protest against everything that seemed to endanger monotheism unfitted the Jewish mind for the conception of this doctrine, or of any idea that necessitated it. If, nevertheless, the original data, out of which the doctrine could not fail to grow, were given in Jewish minds, on Jewish soil, this is strong evidence of their divine origin.

To trace the course taken by the development of the doctrine is, for my purpose, neither necessary nor possible. It is enough to indicate the main currents of thought, and their relation to the Christian consciousness. As the movement derived its impulse from the life and work of Christ, its first and most important concern was with his relation to God. The doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit

assumed prominence at a later time. We shall do best to observe the same order.

The age immediately after that of the apostles was the age of simple faith and simple people. Judging by the few writings of this time that remain to us, it was emphatically the age in which "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, were called." The fifty years that followed the death of St. John seem to have been a time of stationary repose in Christian thought. Converts were instructed and baptized according to New Testament formulæ and precedents; but there was no inquiry into the internal relation of God to himself implied in Christian teaching. But as soon as new sources of information present themselves, we behold an unceasing activity of thought concentrated on the question, "What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he?"

The Ebionites, a party or parties composed of Jewish believers in Jesus as the Messiah, including here and there, it may be, a few Gentile proselytes, and having their abodes in Palestine and adjacent regions, replied boldly and baldly: "He is man, pure and simple, — anointed with the spirit of prophecy beyond other prophets, but differing from them only in degree." This was the outcome of their Jewish conception of God. Moreover, the phraseology of the Jewish Scriptures, which de-

scribe Jehovah's king over Israel as his Son, furnished them with a ready explanation of the term "Son of God" applied to Christ.

Ebionitism was but a poor form of baptized Judaism. It had neither life nor thought. But, as to thought at least, the case is different with several Ebionizing parties or teachers found in various parts of ancient Gentile Christendom. None of these present the doctrine in Ebionite bareness; most of them seek to raise Christ to a certain uniqueness among men, but all leave him at last a mere man. The human alone supplies the personality, the divine permeates and endows it. He is not God incarnate in any sense which does not also apply in varying degrees to other prophets and elect persons. Hence, also, he is not the creator of new spiritual life, but only the awakener of what lay dormant in man. Such, with many differences in reaching and stating the final result, was the doctrine of the Alogi, of whom we hear in Asia Minor, the adherents of Theodotus (or rather the *two* Theodoti) and Artemon at Rome, and Paul of Samosata at Antioch in Syria. But Ebionitism in every form was disowned as soon as it was recognized. The Christ-consciousness of the ancient church was much too vigorous and clear to find satisfaction in it. Much as it might long for intellectual comprehension, it preferred the incom-

prehensible to that which reduced its spiritual experience to relative, if not absolute, delusion.

Diametrically opposed to the Ebionizing doctrine was that of the so-called Patripassians. This looked upon Christ as the Incarnate God, but would hear of no real distinction between the Father and the Son. These were only names for one and the same being. The term Son applied only to Jesus, the historical personage, in whom God himself appeared clothed in the form of humanity. The best known representatives of this doctrine are Praxeas (who went from Asia Minor to Rome, and taught there); Noetus of Smyrna, Beryl of Bostra in Arabia (whom Origen induced to recant), and the famous Sabellius, who gave it its highest, most thoroughly developed form. Unlike the Ebionitic doctrine, this form of ancient Unitarianism did not come into conflict with the Christian consciousness of the people in its simple form of personal spiritual experience. On the contrary, it was the crude, intellectually undigested expression of that experience. Hence, when Praxeas appeared at Rome, there came a speedy end to the Ebionitism that was seeking to establish itself there.[1] Indeed, it scarcely admits of a doubt that it was not only an old doctrine, — Justin Martyr (Trypho, ch. 128) already alludes to it, — but widely current among

[1] Cf. Dorner, *Person Christi*, i. 522 f.

the masses of believers. It seemed to do away with all subordinationism, to give inconceivable value to the work and sacrificial death of Christ, and to present the Infinite God in the character of immediate sympathetic participant in all the sufferings and temptations of life in a sinful world. Of this the simple believer felt his need; and to the possession of this in Christ, his experience testified.

But the Christian consciousness is not a merely passive subject. In the first flush of deliverance and new life, or if awakened while the intellect is in a state of childlike immaturity until that is changed, it may be content to rest in its spiritual experiences. But the time must come when it will begin to think about its own contents, and seek to explain and harmonize them with other truth. Now, it was impossible, when the mind once began to reflect on the subject, to suppose that, while Christ through his incarnation was subject to all the limitations of time and space, God could have absolutely laid aside his transcendence over these, and left the universe without its head and support. And this conclusion of reason found its fullest corroboration in the utterances of Christ himself. Moreover, while the Christian consciousness can never knowingly accept in thought that which contravenes its experience, it may recognize elements of truth in what as a whole it must reject, as well

as error in what it accepts. Hence, while it rejected all Ebionitic conceptions of Christ as utterly inadequate, it recognized the value of the humanity of the Redeemer on which Ebionitism one-sidedly insisted, and also saw that Patripassianism with equal one-sidedness virtually excluded it, and thus jeopardized the very treasure it sought to guard. For the Patripassian Jesus was more or less a delusive phantom, not a true man. The Incarnation was not real. The human was but a veil or garment of the divine. The passion of Jesus, his human sharing in suffering, and the promise of exaltation that his brotherhood held out to men, were all weakened and rendered doubtful, when the reflecting mind felt itself forced to the conclusion that the appearance of God in the semblance of man had been a spectacle, a scenic display, not a reality. Such a discovery would have been destruction to a faith resting on anything less secure than personal experience of redemption and renovation. To the ancient church it merely supplied a stimulus to thought. It revealed the problem, and urged to its solution. Christ was God and Christ was man; and the problem was not, as Nicodemus would have put it, How can this be? but How is it? That was the starting-point of the long debate, which found not a complete but its essential answer in the decision of the Council of Nicæa.

The intellectual movement through which this answer was attained is the noblest in the history of thought. Though unmistakably marked by human imperfections of every kind, abounding in mutual misapprehensions, defects of reasoning, obscurity of expression, and sadly overshadowed by its concomitants of hatred and oppression, it discloses to the sympathetic mind most convincing evidence of the directing presence of the Spirit of Truth. It is much too vast to be even barely outlined in the time at our command. All we can do is to note a few chief waymarks along its course. And of those we must choose only such as bear directly on our subject, which you must remember is the Trinity, not the Incarnation, which has been assigned to another lecturer.

It was doubtless under the influence of Greek philosophy, in which many of the earlier Christian teachers were well versed, that the thought of the church concentrated itself on the name Logos given by St. John to the Son of God. The Logos was with God in the beginning; the Logos was the only-begotten Son of God; and the Logos was God. Here was identity and yet difference, Godhead and yet Sonship. How were these relations to be conceived consistently with the unity of God? Concerning the Deity of the Logos there was no uncertainty. It may well be that the loftiest

ascriptions of divine attributes to him were made when, for the moment, the real distinction between him and the Father, in which the whole difficulty comes to view, was lost sight of; but they sprang from convictions that never wavered. The philosophically trained fathers took the term Logos in the twofold sense of Reason and Word, although St. John used it only in the latter. Reason and Word, both immaterial things, connected readily with the idea of God as the Infinite Spirit, the pure Intelligence and Energy. The Reason as immanent in Deity, and the Creative Word as issuing from him, presented, so to speak, the groundwork on which the doctrine of the Trinity was reared. They formed nominal distinctions which served as stepping-stones to the real, essential distinctions; but they were also liable to be confused or unconsciously interchanged, which accounts for much that is obscure or contradictory in the writings of the fathers. In both forms the Logos is God: as Reason, immanent in God, he is necessarily eternal, "timeless and beginningless." But the distinction between God and the Reason of God was too liable to be regarded as identical with that between subject and attribute, and might easily lead to Patripassianism. Besides, speculative thought, Old Testament Jewish as well as Philonic Greek, had postulated the necessity of a real,

objective distinction in the Divine Being in order to the production of the universe, and the New Testament ascribed this very work to the Logos, the Son and "image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation" (Col. i. 13 ff.). Hence the Logos, the Creative Word, was defined as the immanent Reason issuing forth from the Divine Being for external action. The danger of making him a mere attribute was thereby, if not averted, greatly lessened, for it made it almost impossible to conceive him otherwise than as a conscious actor. But it also opened up a new series of questions. What was the nature of this going forth, and when did it take place? The first question was answered by a variety of expressions, all of them, however, recognized as more or less metaphorical. Thus the Logos was said to come forward (emerge) out of God, to be projected (thrown out) by God, and, with special reference to New Testament phraseology, to be uttered by Him (as Word), and to be begotten by the Father. The important point at issue was, whether the genesis or generation of the Son, as a distinct personality, was of the nature of emanation, *i. e.* derivation, from the essence of the Father, or of creation. The latter was seen to be utterly irreconcilable with the true Deity of the Son, and therefore negatived. Arianism, which accepted it, was thereby rejected. The

other alternative, though nearer the truth, was not without hidden elements of danger. As it made the Son's existence a derivation from the Father's essence, — of which more anon, — and conceived it effected by the Father's will, it involved the subordination of the Son to the Father, which again endangered his absolute Deity, and also made it difficult to maintain the Unity.

As to the time of the Son's generation, the prevalent view, before Origen, placed it immediately before the creation of the world. God willed the Logos or Son, hitherto immanent in himself as impersonal reason, into the state of personal, independent existence, and then through him created all things. It is true, there were those who, like Clement of Alexandria, held to the eternity of the Logos; but it is doubtful whether they conceived of him as a person. But the commoner view, while it saved the Deity of the Son as to nature and essence, could not explain how he could have the attribute of eternity, and thus made him inferior to the Father. Moreover, it came into conflict with the immutableness of the Divine Being. These difficulties were obviated by Origen's doctrine of the eternal generation. The light, he said, cannot but shine, — it is never without its luminous glow; so, also, the Father cannot be thought without a Son. There was never a time when the Son was

not.[1] That is, the generation was not a momentary act, done once for all. It is an eternal process within the Divine Being, by which God unintermittently differentiates himself to himself as Father and Son.

Such were the steps, roughly sketched and grouped according to their logical rather than chronological connection, by which the ancient church elaborated the leading conceptions that enter into the doctrine of the Trinity. We shall soon see how the Council of Nicæa, occasioned by the Arian controversies, combined them, and in its creed registered the progress made down to its time. But first I must add a word on the doctrine concerning the Holy Spirit. The same comparative want of definite conceptions, which we found to characterize the Christian consciousness of the apostolic age on this subject, continued generally throughout the ante-Nicene age, and for the same reasons. The work and manifestations of the Spirit were not so peculiar in form as to force immediate inquiry. The task of determining the relations of Christ to God absorbed all powers of thought. When, in the early Christian age, Jews censure the Christian doctrine of God, it is always assumed to teach two divine persons, not three.[2]

[1] Dorner, *Person Christi*, i. 642.

[2] Weber, *Altsynag. Paläst. Theol.*, p. 148.

Whatever inference this may justify can, however, only be considered to apply to Jewish Christians. As to the general body of believers, the evidence is meagre, and so obscure as to admit of various interpretations.[1] That all recognized the Holy Spirit as one of the sacred Triad cannot be doubted. But some of the fathers speak of him very indefinitely; while others seem to confuse, if not the persons, the functions, of the Logos and the Spirit in a surprising manner. Origen seems to have regarded the Spirit as a divine person, the first and greatest of the "all things" that were made by the Logos. Certain it is that both he and others subordinated the Spirit to the Father and the Son, as they subordinated the Son to the Father. Of course, Arius and his followers could not admit the true Deity of the Spirit while they denied that of the Son. Yet the Creed of Nicæa made but one brief statement (less explicit in fact, though not designedly so, than the utterances of the Apostles' Creed), *viz.*, "We believe in the Holy Ghost." The true explanation of this surprising fact is doubtless that the main body of the church was not ready to accept any intellectual interpretation of its spiritual experience in a region where it received so few hints from apostolic tradition to direct it. Wholesome fear of rash speculation,

[1] Cf. Neand., *Ch. Hist.*, i. 603 ff.

of which there had already been but too much, probably restrained many who would have urged no other objections. Certainly Athanasius cannot have been the only one at Nicæa who had penetrated to the deeper view. It may be that he and they purposely and prudently refrained from imperiling the one definition of supreme importance by combining with it another that could better wait, and would be sure to follow.

It is time now to give a brief outline of the formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity, through the several stages represented by the creeds that come into consideration here. The Nicene Creed asserted the true Deity of Christ in the most varied terms. He is declared to be the "Son of God, begotten from the Father an Only-begotten, that is, of the essence of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God; begotten, not made, of the same essence (*homoousion*) with the Father." That which is still lacking, namely, the conception of the generation as out of all time relations, is supplied by the closing condemnation of Arian phraseology and (alas!) its defenders: "And those who say, 'there was a time when he was not,' and 'before he was begotten he was not,' and 'he sprang from things that are not,' or allege that the Son of God is of a different substance or essence, or created, changeable or mutable, the

Catholic Church anathematizes." It would seem difficult to express and guard more fully the conception of the Son as eternally coexistent and consubstantial with the Father. Both his true Deity and his distinction from the Father are affirmed. But the relation of the Father and the Son to the one Deity, the divine Monad, is not indicated, or rather it is obscured. The Father is represented as the "one God," [1] who out of his essence begets the Son. The *homoousion* of the creed can therefore only be taken as meaning "of the same essence as to quality." The sense "of the same essence numerically" can scarcely have been uppermost when that phrase was used; for how could the Father give of his essence to the Son without dividing it, unless he gave the whole and denuded himself? The better conception we shall find to be that the begetting of the Son by the Father has nothing to do with the communication of the divine essence, but only with the origination of the hypostatic (personal) relation of Father and Son. The failure of the creed to bring out the relation of the persons in the Trinity to the Unity of the Godhead leaves the *Deity* of the Son (not his Sonship merely) dependent on the Father, and therefore subordinate to the Deity of the Father. The

[1] "We believe in one God, Father Almighty, . . . and in one Lord, Jesus Christ," etc. Cf. Gies., *Ch. Hist.*, i. 297, n. 7.

Council most certainly did not aim at this result;[1] but it is logically involved in their language. The Council of Constantinople mitigated this defect, without however removing it, by dropping the expression, "begotten of the essence of the Father." Whether it was done intentionally, or otherwise, is not known.

The chief alterations made in the Nicene Creed by the Council of Constantinople (A. D. 381) were designed to extend the Nicene definitions to the Holy Spirit, with immediate reference to the errors of the Macedonians and other Pneumatomachians, as they were called, who for the most part regarded the Holy Spirit as a created being, the "servant and attendant" of God. The Council declared the Holy Spirit to be "the Lord [cf. 2 Cor. iii. 17], the Giver of Life [John vi. 63], who proceeds from the Father [John xv. 26], who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake through the prophets." The article appears to be a compromise on the basis of Scriptural terms (the true exegesis of which is not very carefully inquired into), but it clearly aims to inculcate the Nicene doctrine as applied to the Holy Spirit. It virtually includes the *homoousion* without expressing it. A few years before, a Roman synod, under Damasus, had already declared

[1] Cf. Dorner, *Person Christi*, i. 929 ff.

the Holy Spirit to be of one power and substance with the Father and the Son. About the same time an Illyrian synod had said that "the triad, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" is *homoousion*.[1] Almost twenty years before Constantinople, a synod at Alexandria, presided over by Athanasius, declared the same doctrine.[2] A very large part of the Council of Constantinople would undoubtedly have accepted the term unhesitatingly. But with or without the *homoousion*, the creed exhibits in its new form the incompleteness there was in the old. The relation of the Three to the One is left undetermined, as also that of the Spirit and the Son to each other.

I cannot say that every trace of these defects was removed, but they were greatly reduced by the western church, chiefly under impulses from the powerful mind of Augustine. Over and over again this father asserts the *filioque*, the procession of the Spirit from the Father *and the Son*, long before the Toledan synod of A. D. 589 inserted the word into the creed of Constantinople.[3] This addition, of no great importance in itself, effectively counteracted the lingering subordinationism of the East.

[1] Cf. Gies., *Ch. Hist.*, i. 312, n. 35; Hefele, *Hist. of Councils*, sect. 39 f.

[2] Gieseler, i. 306.

[3] Cf. Hagenbach, *Hist. Doct.*, i. 264, n. 5.

On the relation of the Persons to the Unity, Augustine is equally decided: "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together are not greater as to essence than the Father alone or the Son alone; but the three Hypostases or Persons (if they can be so named), taken together, are equal to each taken separately. . . . The Trinity itself is the one God, — the one God in the same sense that he is the one Creator: what do they mean who say that the Son created all things at the command of the Father, as if the Father had not created, but had ordered it to be done by the Son? They fashion for themselves, in the imagination of their hearts as it were, two beings, mutually near, yet each occupying his own place, — one commanding, the other obediently complying. Nor do they perceive that the command of the Father, that all things be made, is itself nothing else than the Word of the Father through which all things were made."[1] In this language speaks a clear perception of the nature of the personal or hypostatic distinctions in the Trinity, and of their relations to the Unity and to each other. It may have been as clearly apprehended (though, so far as I know, not taught) by Athanasius and the great Cappadocians, especially Gregory of Nyssa. But Augustine influenced its formulation in a creed-statement. It is the opinion

[1] Gies., *Ch. Hist.*, i. 313, n. 41.

of Neander and Hagenbach that the Athanasian Creed originated in Augustine's own century and country, while Gieseler puts it in the seventh century and in Spain. However that may be, the formula breathes the Augustinian spirit and thought. It sedulously guards against breaking up the divine essence into three parts, so as to make three Gods, who are one only in the nominal sense in which three individuals are one family. Nor, on the other hand, does it allow the eternally immanent distinctions of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to be obliterated, or in the slightest degree obscured; but, eschewing every approach to the introduction of notions of rank or degree within the Deity as between the Three, it endows all alike with equal eternity, immensity, power, and glory, and finds the notes of the personal distinctions between them in the time-honored Scriptural terms "generation" and "procession," which, while they explain nothing, assist the mind to keep its hold on relations of which the imagination can form no adequate conception. The great defect of this, and perhaps of every creed that was ever drawn up, is that it makes no explicit use of the Origenistic conception of the "generation" (and, by parity of reasoning, of the "procession" also) as an eternal process, without end as well as without beginning. That thought lies behind the expression "begotten

before all ages," and all other affirmations of the timelessness of the generation; but only he can find it who knows that it is there to be found. Yet in it we have the means of approximately comprehending what in its completeness must forever transcend the powers of finite intelligence.

We have not, I trust, lost sight of the purpose and bearing of the review that has engaged our thoughts. I have not been trying to *prove* the doctrine of the Trinity, by the authority of either the Scriptures, the church, or the reason. I have sought to exhibit it as the deliverance of the Christian consciousness, and therefore to that consciousness self-attesting. The whole argument is simply this: Christian experience of spiritual redemption, freedom, life, and strength, being an experience of divine creative power in the soul, evokes spontaneous recognition of the Deity (Divinity, if you will) of Christ and the Holy Spirit, by whom the effects are wrought. This is the universal fact of Christianity. It was not in their experience, but in the theories to which it gave rise, that men differed in the early church. Patripassian, Sabellian, Arian, Semi-Arian, Nicene, all genuine Christians, had essentially the same personal experience of the life that had come from heaven to earth. The same is true to-day. The foundation of the

Trinitarian doctrine, however faint or disguised, is found in every one to whom a Christian church is something more than a Mohammedan mosque, Buddhist temple, or even Jewish synagogue. The experience of the power of the Incarnation is the foundation of all Christian dogmatic certitude. No doctrine rooted in it can fall, and none without this rooting can permanently stand.

My endeavor to-day has been to show that the doctrine of the Trinity, as formulated by the church, is the necessary outcome of the facts of Christian experience; that it resulted from no arbitrary system-making proclivity, but from the imperative necessity of rejecting conceptions which involved a denial of the Incarnation; that no definition was made until after the most thorough and protracted discussion, and then only within limits that barely sufficed to cover the point of danger. To this I now add that the men who led the thinking and gave expression to its results were almost without exception, intellectually and spiritually, the most richly endowed of their day and generation. What the great prophets were to ancient Israel, that the great fathers were to the Christian church. On the one hand, they impersonated the life of the Christian people, its faith, love, and hope, in their highest form; and on the other, they were the fitly chosen organs through whom the Spirit of Truth

imparted enlightenment and instruction to the vast body of the faithful. They were — why should I hesitate to use the word? — the inspired interpreters of God's historical self-revelation in the Christian consciousness.

One final word of practical bearing on your future work as Christian teachers. The importance of the doctrine cannot be overestimated. All distinctively Christian truth stands or falls with it; for all Christian truth presupposes it, and it in turn presupposes all Christian truth. This fact, while it shows its importance, also indicates how it is to be taught. It is not to be exhibited as a matter of abstract philosophical theology. Nor is it to be laboriously deduced from this proof-text or that, as a doctrine which it hath pleased God to reveal, and which must therefore be reverently believed. Neither is it to be relegated to one Sunday in the year. If it does not shine through all your doctrine throughout the year, Trinity Sunday cannot fail to be dreaded by yourself, and a weariness to your hearers. The teaching must take the character and follow the order of the original revelation. The sense of sin must be evoked, the mute longings of the soul after God must be interpreted, that receptivity of the spirit which is the essence of faith must be developed, the divine Redeemer must be

presented in the fullness of his grace and love, the workings of the invigorating, inspiring indwelling of the Holy Ghost must be unweariedly delineated. And all this not in the dry form of dogmatic teaching, but in the warm glow of living experience. To a congregation thus guided into the perception of Christian truth, Trinity Sunday will bring no new or strange message, but simply the summing up and necessary outcome of all it has lived and felt and thought. The doctrine of the Trinity will have been built up in and with its spiritual life. The intellectual side of such a living belief will doubtless vary as mental capacity and historical knowledge vary, but it can never be insufficient for the practical purposes of the Christian life. And on the other hand, no intellectual apprehension, however perfect, without this basis in personal spiritual life, would be of value.

LECTURE X.

THE SPECULATIVE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY.

We have traced the origin and development of the doctrine until its formulation in the great symbols of the church. Can we now do anything to make it more readily grasped by the mind? Observe, I do not say, Can we establish it on a securer basis? That, it must be admitted at once, cannot be done. Nor is it needed. The doctrine has its solid foundation in the life experience of the Christian church. It is a most practical doctrine, and continually meets with practical verification from experience. To such as lack the Christian consciousness, it might be a highly interesting metaphysical truth, but could scarcely be of spiritual efficacy, although it were demonstrable with the certainty of a proposition in geometry. But something can be done to show that there is no contradiction in it; to make it more conceivable, more congenial, so to speak, to the mind. And that cannot but be welcome to the most assured believer. Even the doubter may perhaps

be made to see that there is in it more that is reasonable and probable than he had thought.

The popular objection that three cannot be one derives its whole force from the assumption that the same noun is to be supplied to each numeral. The very absurdity of what it denies ought to be enough to warn any rational mind that it can be of no avail against the Christian doctrine. Of course, three persons cannot be one person, if in each case by "person" a true, individual personality be understood. I have already explained that when, for want of a better word, we speak of three "persons," we do not use the term in the sense of personality. Personality implies what in philosophy is called an "ego," a self, — not mere consciousness, but self-consciousness and self-determining will. We certainly do not mean that in the Trinity there are three egos, three independent wills.[1] What we do mean is that God has in himself three centres or *foci* of consciousness, in and through each of which his *one* personality utters itself. In each of these centres the whole of the one and indivisible divine life focalizes itself in all its fullness, not successively nor alternately, now in one, now in the other, but simultaneously and eternally. Thus each centre is full of personality; but it is the one personality

[1] Cf. Dr. Kedney, *Christ. Doct. Harmonized*, i. chap. xi.

of the one God. Moreover, each centre is to be conceived as specially related to different lines of divine action, — the one to works of power and creation, the other to works of executive wisdom, the third to works of unifying mediation. All the divine perfections are active in each, but so as to converge to different immediate ends. Herein we have the ontological ground for the different forms under which the three hypostases are apprehended by us in history and revelation: the economic Trinity, the Trinity of manifestation, has its necessary basis in eternal distinctions within the Godhead.

Let us now bring this into connection with the creed statements. When the creeds speak of the essence of God, they denote the spirit-substance of his being, — the to us incomprehensible substratum or vehicle of his personality. What I have called "centres," in which the one personality of God focalizes itself, as our personality may be said to focalize itself in the brain, the creeds call the "persons" of the Trinity. They act as the organs of personal being, and therefore the name, though liable to misinterpretation, is not wholly inappropriate. When the creeds say that the persons are *homoousion*, of the same essence, they mean that each has the whole essence of the one Deity as the substratum of his own existence. The divine

essence is not divided among them, so much to one, so much to the other, but all is in each, because each is a centre of consciousness of the one Personality. Of course, the fathers of the church knew fully as well as we that God is immaterial, that we cannot properly ascribe substance or essence to him, except by abstracting from these terms everything that is cognizable by mortal sense-perception; but it was in this way that they sought to express the absolute *oneness* of the Divine Being, and the absolute *deity* of each of the hypostases or persons. When, finally, the creeds say that the Son is *begotten* of the Father, and that the Holy Ghost *proceeds* from the Father and the Son, they use Scriptural terms, the exact import of which no one ever pretended to determine, but which in general were understood to denote derivation of being, without, however, involving origin in time, — all three were conceived to be coeternal. How that may be made more comprehensible, we shall see further on. For the present it is enough if we have clearly possessed ourselves of the Christian conception of the Trinity, — that God has in himself three centres of consciousness, in each of which his one personality focalizes itself, and works in lines peculiar to each.

Physical illustrations of spiritual relations so transcendent can illustrate nothing, although they

may seem to do so. Nevertheless they have been used from the days of the fathers until our own. A few examples will show their character. There is the analogy of the fountain, the river, and the current; of the fire, its light and its heat; of the cloud, the rain, and the mist of evaporation. These, it may be allowed, furnish the ideas of derivation, diversity in form or mode of subsistence, and movement, but they utterly break down on the numerical *homoousion*, or identity of essence, the only point that would give them value. Others are still more unsatisfactory. Consider the examples of the root, trunk, and branches of a tree; the form, color, and perfume of a flower; the size, shape, and color of any object whatever. Here we have mere triads of parts or properties in one object. As to some of them, we can see no necessary mutual relations between them, except that of coexistence, *e. g.* size, shape, color; in others it does not appear what ground there is for finding a triad rather than a quartette or any other composite of parts, — *e. g.* to the roots, trunk, branches, of a tree, why not add leaves and fruit? It is true, none of these or similar illustrations were offered to prove the Trinity in Unity, but merely to suggest some conception of how it may be. But as they all lack the element of conscious personal life, they at best leave the matter where

they found it. They may even result in darkening counsel by words without knowledge. The inquiring mind, arrested by the offered analogy of the fountain, the river, and the current, may ask, Wherein lies the unity of these? In the whole body of water? Then the three are different parts of the unit, but not three modes under each of which the whole appears; for the water that is at any moment in the fountain is not the water that is in the river. They may be of the same nature, but they are not numerically the same. Thus we reach a composite God. Does the unity lie in that body of water which is at any moment in the fountain? Then that which is now fountain will anon be river and current. The unity evidently passes through different phases. The same substance is now exclusively fountain, anon river or current, — the doctrine of Sabellianism. Is the unity merely a matter of thought? Fountain, river, and current, being connected in various ways, are they for that reason conceived as one? Then the unity is an abstraction; the real thing is the three, — Tritheism.

A much higher class of analogies, gradually rising into what deserve to be called efforts to construct the Trinity by speculative reasoning, are based upon the assumption that, since man was made in the image of God, there must be in his

spiritual nature hints and shadows, at least, of what the divine nature is. The analogy was at first sought in the three powers of the soul, — the intellect, the will, and the affections; but Augustine, with profounder insight into all the conditions of the problem, endeavored to find it in the human self-consciousness. The three words of which he makes use in his subtlest reasonings on this subject are memory, the intellect, and will. Instead of "will" he also uses "love;" for, says he, "what else is love than will?"[1] And in truth will, wish, desire, love, readily flow into each other. By "memory" he understands what may be called the thought-material which lies latent in the mind, before the intellect converts it into conscious thought, — the unshaped thought to which the cognitive faculty gives form.[2] Hence he also substitutes "the mind itself" for it. Thus, he says, "we have a sort of image of the Trinity in the mind itself, together with its knowledge of itself, which is its offspring and its word concerning itself, and thirdly love."[3] These words also indicate the drift of his reasoning. The mind or memory is a storehouse of latent, inert knowledge. It or any part of it may have been true, quick know-

[1] *De Trin.*, xv. 38.

[2] Cf. *De Trin.*, xv. 40, and *Baur, Dreieinigkeitslehre*, i. 869.

[3] *De Trin.*, ix. 18.

ledge once, and have been relegated into obscurity again (hence the term "memory"); but it becomes and is true and actual knowledge only when the intellect takes cognizance of it. Then the mind knows objectively what until then it held in latency. But the activity of the intellect on the contents of the "memory" springs from an impulse of the will (or love). Thus every act of knowledge is the result of the interaction of these three functions of the mind. Now, as self-consciousness is an act of knowledge, it can only arise in the same way. Here we reach the central nerve of Augustine's reasoning. For if the human spirit, fashioned after the likeness of God, reaches self-consciousness only through the coöperation of these three functions, is there not good reason for thinking that the Infinite Spirit likewise realizes himself in an analogous way? that the trinity of hypostases is in fact the indispensable condition of the divine self-consciousness?[1]

This analogical argument was also employed by Anselm and others of the Scholastics, but, so far as I know, not materially improved. Melancthon's version of it is of special interest, because it endeavors to point out clearly (whether tenably, is another question) the hitherto unindicated connection between the objective thought of the divine

[1] Cf. A. Dorner, *Augustinus*, p. 5 ff.

intellect and the hypostatic distinction in the divine nature. I quote his own words:[1] "There are two properties of the soul, — understanding and will. The understanding begets images by thinking; the will possesses impulsive force, as when the heart begets high courage, feels love, gladness, or other affections." "Since the Son may be called Logos, he is begotten by thinking; but a thought is an image of the thing thought: the Logos is therefore called Son because the Son is the image of the Father. But the Holy Spirit is said to 'proceed,' because love belongs to the will. The Father, therefore, beholding the Son, desires and loves him; and the Son, in turn, beholding the Father, desires and loves him: through this mutual love, properly an act of will, the Holy Spirit, who is the exciter of motion, proceeds from the Father and the Son, the coeternal image of the Father. Therefore, as 'begetting' is attributed to the understanding, so we say that 'procession' is from the will, because the will is the seat of love and motion. Now in us there is no transfusion of our essence into any images, or into any love or impulse, even though our nature be vehemently carried away by love or gladness, and transports

[1] See Twesten, *Dogmatik*, ii. 208. Twesten's instructive discussion of the Trinity may be found translated in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for 1846.

itself, so to speak, into the beloved object. But the image of the eternal Father, which is the Son, is of the substance of the eternal Father, and the essence of the Father and the Son is communicated to the Holy Spirit."

In the last two sentences of the foregoing, Melancthon meets the objection which inevitably presents itself, that the image which *we* project is one of pure thought, evanescent and without real existence, by asserting a transfusion or communication of the divine *essence* by the Father, which, if admitted, would certainly reintroduce the subordinationism of which Augustine freed the doctrine.[1] Whether a better way of perfecting the analogy can be suggested, will be considered anon. At this point, it is more to the purpose to note another defect. You have observed that the analogy, as proposed by both Augustine and Melancthon, sets out with an analysis of the human self-consciousness, — that is, it views the mind as turned in upon itself, and in thought constructing an image or picture of itself; that done, it abandons the self-consciousness, and introduces the will, or love, to furnish the third side needed. But thereby it leaves the analogy incomplete, and gives up whatever demonstrative value it might have had. For it is evident that will or love (that is, in this case, self-

[1] Cf. above, p. 239, and Dorner's *Augustinus*, p. 28 ff.

love), being an utterance of already established self-consciousness, cannot be invoked for its origination. It presupposes it.

These weak points discovered, many more recent theologians have endeavored so to construct the analogy as to avoid them. I shall endeavor to present it in the newer form as briefly and clearly as I may. The chief difficulty of the undertaking lies in the psychological analysis which it involves.

Let us first ask how we come to full self-consciousness, — to the full sense of personality, and what that involves. And that means much more than if I were to ask, How do we know that we are not other persons, nor stones or trees, — that there is something we call "self" in us, and many not-selves outside of us? It means, How do we come to know what the self in us is and contains, what it can do and feel, — in short, what its nature and powers are? Self-consciousness — the knowledge of self — goes much farther than the mere consciousness that there is a self or me. The infant becomes cognizant of the not-me as soon as it begins to notice things, and to reach out after them; and in that perception of the not-me there is included, as its opposite, the perception of the me as different from the not-me. But this is by no means true self-consciousness. It is only a first approach towards it, such as brutes also have. They,

too, perceive a difference between themselves and things not themselves. Clear self-consciousness requires the power of reflection, which brutes have not, or in low degree. The child has it, and in proportion to the use it makes of it advances toward true self-consciousness. But even in the brightest child the knowledge of its own personality is next to nothing. It has will enough of a kind, but it is the instinctive impulse of an animal. Of its true self it is yet ignorant. In hosts of men self-consciousness is never fully developed, not even for an instant; and in none, though possibly reached at intervals, is it permanently and uninterruptedly held. The finite spirit cannot realize itself without losing the external world, on which, in its incorporate form, it depends for existence.

Let us next trace the process by which self-consciousness is developed. Two steps are necessary. The first has already been described to us by Augustine and Melancthon. Prior to it, the mind must be conceived as being in a state of what we may call nature-automatism. Its action differs in no respect from that of the brute mind. But as human mind it has in it, what the brute mind has not, the power to attain personality, and the latent impulse to enter on the road towards that attainment. How it is that the latent impulse starts into action, we cannot know, but the result is mat-

ter of experience. The mind awakes, so to speak, to a premonition of its personality. It turns its eye in upon itself, and views its own inner world, — observes its powers of thought, will, and feeling; discovers the springs of their action and notes their capabilities and limitations, — in short, forms an image, a thought-photograph, of itself. Is self-consciousness now attained? By no means. We have the percipient mind, and we have the perceived image of itself on which it gazes. But as yet the two stand over against each other like strangers. Something must come and tell the percipient mind that the image it gazes on is or depicts its own self. And of course that something must come from within the mind itself; in other words, it must be the mind itself in another relation to the image than that in which it formed it. It must be able to view both the self-inspecting mind and the image it projects as objects, and to pronounce upon the relation between them. Such a diremption of the mind, mysterious as it is, is not only necessary to explain self-consciousness, but seems to come to light in multitudes of abnormal psychological phenomena, which tend to put its possibility beyond question. Therefore, to restate the whole process in few words, the mind, in the first place, as subject, creates by self-inspection an objective image of itself; and then, by a second

act, recognizes itself in the image, and thus arrives at clear self-consciousness.

It is probable that most persons, not familiar with psychological inquiries, would object that, while not aware of any marked deficiency of self-consciousness, they never made any such sudden and wonderful attainment of it as I have described. And they would be right. What I have described as if it were a single event in the life of the soul, is in fact the outcome of innumerable partial events of the same nature, but not of the same intensity, all tending to the same great result. We have grown each of us, almost imperceptibly, into that stage of true, self-conscious personality at which we have arrived. Our self-consciousness, as a present, realized possession, is constantly fluctuating; but in the moments of its highest realization, could we analyze it, it would be found to present the movements pointed out.

Now, as God is the perfect self-conscious Spirit, are we not justified in concluding that an analogous process takes place in him? and that, as he is absolutely free from the limitations of time, growth, and imperfection of every kind, it takes place in him eternally and uninterruptedly? We have, then, an analogy which tells of a ceaseless movement within the Divine Being by which his self-consciousness is produced and maintained. But

how are we to conceive of this? In us, the image of itself projected by the mind in thought is not indeed pure image, mere shadow (for thought cannot be wholly devoid of the life that begets it), but neither is it the adequate representation or counterpart of the spirit. It is only partially complete. The human spirit can neither fathom itself entirely, so as to project itself wholly into the image, nor can it completely separate the image from itself, so as to give it a real existence of its own.[1] Hence our self-consciousness is never absolutely full; and there is always in it a trace or remnant of the impersonal nature-life which precedes it. But no such disability attaches to God. He is Infinite Life, — Perfect Spirit. In him the process must reach its ideal character. The objective self-projection must be exhaustive, and the diremption must be complete. That in which perfect deity is to recognize itself must *be* perfect deity, — in fact as well as form. Nor is it difficult to apprehend, proximately at least, how this can be, provided we have firmly grasped the idea that God's thinking is not, like ours, merely descriptive of an already existing object, but an outflow of life, giving reality to what it thinks.

If, then, God, as the Divine Essence (the *Ens Divinum*, let us say, for the sake of clearness),

[1] Cf. Dorner, *Glaubenslehre*, i. 407.

be conceived as eternally objectifying himself in thought, and that thought as eternally realized in a living mode or form of the Divine Being, we have reached the conception of God eternally generating the Son, "the image of God," "the impress of his substance" (2 Cor. iv. 4; Heb. i. 3). Observe, I said not, God as Father, but God as the (*per hypothesin* undifferentiated) *Ens Divinum;* for, in the logical order of thought, the Father *as* Father comes into being only with the Son. Father and Son are both subsistence-forms, modes of being (τρόποι ὑπάρξεως, *Seinsweisen*) of the one *Ens Divinum.* But you may ask, How can the *Ens Divinum,* prior to the attainment of self-consciousness, objectify himself in thought? in other words, how can he, not being self-conscious, think himself? But the same question may be asked in the case of every human being. How does the human spirit, in order to reach self-consciousness, project itself as another than itself? The only possible answer is that it is inherent in the nature of spirit so to do. I might remind you that in dreams and trances thinking goes on, as showing that thought does not presuppose self-consciousness. But the physical quantity comes in there, and is none the less disturbing because it is unknown. I keep my stand, therefore, back of the physical, and say that as the physical cannot originate thought (however

it may modify it), thought, or, if you please, the thought-process, must exist prior to it, and be an ever-active attribute of spirit as spirit. And as the eternal Spirit is the source of all finite spirit, whatever is in the latter must be present in the former, this never-resting impulse to objectify itself in thought included. Therefore in the Infinite Spirit this self-positing process is not only present, but is as beginningless as the being in whom it takes place.

What we have reached, then, is the conception of the *Ens Divinum* eternally dirempting itself into the twofold relation of thinking subject and thought object, or, as the Christian doctrine expresses it, the relation of Father and Son. All there is in the one is in the other; for the thinker forever thinks himself completely. And as the thinking is effective, real, the object is pervaded by the same life and movement as the subject. Therefore each can contemplate the other as if (to resort to an illustration which, however defective, may be helpful) the reflection in a mirror were endowed with life and power to contemplate the face of which it is the reflection. But this mutual contemplation cannot make the one find *itself* in the other. In and of itself, it can only emphasize the diversity. For subject and object (Father and Son), as such, *are* two, and, in the

sense in which they are two, are not and cannot be identical. They are distinct modes of existence of the one Divine Being. But by another movement the *Ens Divinum*, which is in or under each of these modes, and in both has the same qualities and impulses, sets out simultaneously from each, and in meeting recognizes itself in itself, and thereby (so to speak) closes the circle and establishes self-consciousness. Herewith we reach that third mode of being in the Deity which Christian doctrine describes as the Holy Spirit "proceeding" from the Father and the Son.

We have thus found three relations or modes of being in God. Neither the relations themselves nor their number have been arbitrarily determined; both have been deduced from what we know of the nature of spirit. We have found personal characteristics in the relations, yet (as before explained) they are not persons in the strict and proper sense of the word. The consciousness in each of them is the consciousness of the one Divine Being. Without them, however, God cannot be thought by us as self-conscious Personality, but only as unconscious or sub-conscious pure being, after a pantheistic manner. Deism, the only other alternative, is in the last analysis a mere refusal to think Him at all. From the philosophical point of view, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is the doc-

trine that the Eternal can be and is Self-conscious, Personal Life, — Life infinite and absolute, eternally going forth and returning within himself; and therefore eternally knowing, eternally loving, eternally blessed. The internal process, out of which the divine self-consciousness issues, is without beginning and without end. There never was a time when Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were not, or when God was other than he is.[1]

The argument now finished takes its departure from the constitution of the human mind, and reasons up to God. There are others, starting from ethical principles, which it would be interesting to pursue, did time allow. One of them only I cannot bring myself to pass unnoticed, chiefly because it illustrates, in a striking way, the difference of function pertaining to the distinctions within the Trinity to which I before referred. Whether it is wholly original with Dorner, that greatest of modern theologians, I cannot say, but it is certainly only in his work that it has arrested my attention.[2] It sets out from the fact that, in seeking for the ultimate authority of moral truth, we arrive at a

[1] For another statement of what is essentially the same argument as the above, see Kedney, *Chris. Doct. Harmonized*, i. 97–102.

[2] See *Glaubenslehre*, i. 409 ff.

contradiction or antinomy which nothing but the doctrine of the Trinity resolves.

You will remember that in previous lectures the final ground of truth was incidentally adverted to, in connection with the moral nature of man and the attribute of divine omnipotence.[1] The difficulty takes its rise in connection with moral truth, — the distinction between right and wrong. The question is, What makes right right, and wrong wrong? Only two answers are possible: Right, moral truth, is either the result of the divine will, — a mandate, This shall be moral, that shall be immoral, — or it is rooted and grounded in the divine nature, and therefore necessary, eternally unalterable even for God. There is no third alternative; for if you conceive of something outside of God as the determining power, that something, call it fate or any other name, would be, if not God, superior to God. Now assume that moral truth is the creature of God's will, — that right is right because God has so willed, and that he might have willed otherwise, — what follows? We get a God who, prior to this act of will, was morally undetermined. He was all life and all power and all knowledge, but he had no moral character. In vain should we seek to escape from this by saying that his will was grounded in his character; for

[1] Above, pp. 64 and 137.

that would be to abandon the assumed position, and to imply that moral truth is necessary even for God, — that, though he willed, his will was the outcome of his nature, and could not be other than it was. If right is right simply because God willed it, it is a purely arbitrary matter, and the whole universe is a gigantic instance of might making right!

That cannot be. Therefore we turn to the other alternative, and say that God is and always was morally determined, and that therefore moral truth is what it is by a necessity inherent in God himself. God cannot change it in the least. It is impossible for him, even in his own actions, to deviate from the right by a hair's-breadth, — impossible, not morally merely, but physically. God is, not by choice only, but by nature, incapable of doing wrong. In this way we should secure God's formal righteousness, no doubt, but at the expense of his freedom. Such righteousness in men we should refuse to acknowledge as genuine. It would be the morality of an automaton, — the goodness of a clock that faithfully serves its owner by accurate time-keeping. True morality is a free morality. That is what St. Paul meant by his contrast between the works of the law and the works of the Spirit of freedom. We cannot for a moment suppose that that is wanting in God

which it was the very end of his man-becoming in Christ to impart to us.

Here there are two contradictories, both of which must nevertheless be true. God must be unchangeably morally determined, and he must also be perfectly free to will or not to will that which he finds in himself. The problem is as old as Plato, and as fateful as human existence. It lies at the base of all the serious dogmatic and practical life aberrations of both mediæval and modern days. Its solution, if anywhere to be found, is found in the doctrine of the Trinity. That doctrine affords at least a hint of the direction in which we are to look for light. For though it by no means renders the depths of Deity transparent to finite gaze, it reveals distinctions in God which suggest explanation of the coexistence in him of necessity and freedom, while at the same time it enables us to see why, before Christianity, not an inkling of this solution could be obtained. The God of the old revelation was the God of moral law, and its inexorable guardian. Sin was transgression of external law, and righteousness unquestioning submission to authority. In this the moral necessity of the divine nature, as centred in the Father, comes to view. But the Son of the Christian revelation presents the converse side of perfectly free willing of the right. Christ is the obedient, the sinless

obedient, the free, energetically co-willing obedient. Finally, in the Holy Spirit the Christian consciousness recognizes a divine power which works the union of the two — authority and freedom — in the human individual. Now, that which in revelation thus intimates the coexistence in God of moral necessity, moral freedom, and their union, must correspond to facts within the divine nature; and the eternal process in which the one God unfolds himself into three modes of existence, or centres of consciousness, gives us at least a dim perception of truths so far beyond our comprehension.

Arguments similar to the preceding might be multiplied. They are suggested by every moral attribute of God. It is possible to overrate their value. They are certainly not of such a nature as to render service in popular instruction. But it is no less easy to undervalue them. If they cannot wholly satisfy the thirst of the mind to *know* what it believes, they hold out possibilities, yea prospects, of knowledge, when that which is in part shall have passed away, that cannot fail to animate the Christian life. But this is not their chief value. They all show that every question in ethics and theology, in philosophy and psychology, leads back to God, and that our idea of God receives its highest perfection from the light thrown on it by

the doctrine of the Trinity. This doctrine is the priceless contribution which Christianity, considered as a system of thought, has made to human philosophy. It is the solvent of innumerable difficulties that present themselves to the thinker. Without it, theism — that is, the doctrine of a living, personal, transcendent, yet immanent deity — cannot successfully maintain itself, but must inevitably give way to some form of pantheism.

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